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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 7, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BETTY McCOLLUM to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Reverend Martin L. Wilson, El Paso Sector Chaplain, U.S. Border Patrol, offered the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank You as we gather in this place today for the gift of Your divine providence, for this House and what it represents to the citizens of our great Nation and, indeed, to the world.

We are grateful to You, O Lord, for those patriots who have served in these hallowed halls, who have penned for us those freedoms we so thoroughly enjoy. I pray, Lord, for the matters that are before the Members. As modern day patriots, inspire them in the protection of our people, our culture, and our way of life and the preservation of our civil liberties for generations to come.

I humbly also ask for the protection of those on the front lines, the guardians of our borders. Bless them with courage and integrity to bring honor to our land and to be victorious against all the evils that come against us.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the

last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING THE REVEREND MARTIN WILSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. REYES. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, it is a special privilege for me to recognize Chaplain Martin Wilson. Chaplain Wilson is a 21-year veteran of the United States Border Patrol currently assigned to the Family Support Unit in El Paso, Texas. The Family Support Unit is a 1-year pilot program intended to provide Border Patrol agents, staff and their families with a support network to help manage times of crisis. During his early years in the Border Patrol, Chaplain Wilson served as a program manager under my command as Sector Chief.

Chaplain Wilson is married to San Juanita Wilson who today are celebrating their 27th wedding anniversary. Together they have four children: Alicia; Marty, Jr.; Stephanie; and Daisy. Marty, Jr. recently followed in his father's footsteps, becoming the second in his family to join the United States Border Patrol.

In addition to his duties as Sector Chaplain, Chaplain Wilson serves as

the associate pastor at La Verdad Community Baptist Church and is an advocate for people with physical and developmental disabilities.

Thank you, Chaplain Wilson, for joining us this morning and for serving our Nation as a Border Patrol agent.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. After consultation among the Speaker and the majority and minority leaders, and with their consent, the Chair announces that, when the two Houses meet in joint meeting to hear an address by His Majesty King Abdullah II, only the doors immediately opposite the Speaker and those immediately to her left and right will be open.

No one will be allowed on the floor of the House who does not have the privilege of the floor of the House. Due to the large attendance that is anticipated, the rule regarding the privilege of the floor must be strictly enforced. Children of Members will not be permitted on the floor. The cooperation of all Members is requested.

The practice of reserving seats prior to the joint meeting by placard will not be allowed. Members may reserve their seats by physical presence only following the security sweep of the Chamber.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of Thursday, March 1, 2007, the House stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 5 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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□ 1050

JOINT MEETING OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE TO HEAR AN ADDRESS BY HIS MAJESTY KING ABDULLAH II IBN AL HUSSEIN, KING OF THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

The Speaker of the House presided.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms, Mrs. Kerri Hanley, announced the Vice President and Members of the U.S. Senate who entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, the Vice President taking the chair at the right of the Speaker, and the Members of the Senate the seats reserved for them.

The SPEAKER. The Chair appoints as members of the committee on the part of the House to escort His Majesty King Abdullah II into the Chamber:

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER);

The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN);

The gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS);

The gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL);

The gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN);

The gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY);

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER);

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT);

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. PUTNAM);

The gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN);

The gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA); and

The gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE).

The VICE PRESIDENT. The President of the Senate, at the direction of that body, appoints the following Senators as members of the committee on the part of the Senate to escort His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, into the House Chamber:

The Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID);

The Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN);

The Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY);

The Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY);

The Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL);

The Senator from Mississippi (Mr. LOTT);

The Senator from Arizona (Mr. KYL); and

The Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN).

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, His Excellency Roble Olhaye, Ambassador of the Republic of Djibouti.

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seat reserved for him.

At 11 o'clock and 5 minutes a.m., the Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced

His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, escorted by the committee of Senators and Representatives, entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and stood at the Clerk's desk.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

The SPEAKER. Members of Congress, I have the high privilege and the distinct honor of presenting to you His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

ADDRESS BY HIS MAJESTY KING ABDULLAH II IBN AL HUSSEIN, KING OF THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN.

King ABDULLAH II. Madam Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Honorable Senators and Members of Congress, my friends, thank you for such a warm welcome. It is an honor to stand, as my father did, before this historic institution. Allow me to thank you on behalf of all Jordanians.

Jordan and the United States have had a long friendship. It is a special privilege to be here in the year that the American Congress welcomes its first woman Speaker and its first Muslim-American Member of Congress. These milestones send a message around the world about the America I know so well, a place where individuality is nurtured, a place where hard work is rewarded, a place where achievement is celebrated. The America I know so well believes that opportunity and justice belong to all.

In my days in Massachusetts, I also learned something about New England virtues. There wasn't actually a law about talking too much, but there was definitely an attitude that you didn't speak unless you could improve on silence.

Today, I must speak, and I cannot be silent.

I must speak about a cause that is urgent for your people and for mine. I must speak about peace in the Middle East. I must speak about peace replacing the division, war, and conflict that have brought such disaster for the region and for the world.

This was the cause that brought my father King Hussein here in 1994. With Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin beside him, he spoke of a new vision for the Middle East. Their courageous work for peace received bipartisan support from your leaders. And there was tremendous hope for a new era. There was tremendous hope that people would be brought together. There was tremendous hope that a final and comprehensive settlement of all the issues would be achieved.

Thirteen years later, that work is still not completed. And until it is, we are all at risk. We are all at risk of being victims of further violence re-

sulting from ideologies of terror and hatred. It is our greatest and most urgent duty to prevent such dangers to our region, to your country and to the world. The choice is ours: an open world full of promise, progress and justice for all; or a closed world of divided peoples, fear, and unfulfilled dreams. Nothing impacts this choice more than the future of peace in the Middle East.

I come to you today at a rare, and indeed historic, moment of opportunity, when there is a new international will to end the catastrophe. And I believe that America, with its enduring values, its moral responsibility, and yes, its unprecedented power, must play the central role.

Some may say, "Peace is too difficult. We can live with the status quo." But, my friends, violent killings are taking place as part of this status quo. Palestinians and Israelis are not the only victims. We saw the violence ricochet into destruction in Lebanon last summer. And people around the world have been the victims of terrorists and extremists who use the grievances of this conflict to legitimize and encourage acts of violence. Americans and Jordanians and others have suffered and survived terrorist attacks. In this room, there are representatives of American families and Jordanian families who have lost loved ones. Thousands of people have paid the highest price, the loss of their life. Thousands more continue to pay this terrible price, for their loved ones will never return. Are we going to let these thousands of lives be taken in vain? Has it become acceptable to lose that most basic of human rights? The right to live?

The status quo is also pulling the region and the world towards greater danger. As public confidence in the peace process has dropped, the cycle of crises is spinning faster, and with greater potential for destruction. Changing military doctrine and weaponry pose new dangers. Increasing numbers of external actors are intervening with their own strategic agendas, raising new dangers of proliferation and crisis. These are groups that seek even more division: faith against faith, nation against nation, community against community. Any further erosion in the situation would be serious for the future of moderation and coexistence, in the region and beyond. Have we all lost the will to live together in peace celebrating one another's strengths and differences?

Some may say, "But there are other, urgent challenges." How can there be anything more urgent than the restoration of a world where all people, not only some people, all people have the opportunity to live peacefully? This is not only a moral imperative. It is essential to the future of our world, because long-term, violent crisis is the enemy of all global prosperity and progress.

Certainly our era faces critical issues. There is great public concern

here, just as in our region, about the conflict in Iraq. The entire international community has vital decisions to make about the path forward, and how to ensure Iraq's security, unity, and future. But we cannot lose sight of a profound reality. The wellspring of regional division, the source of resentment and frustration far beyond, is the denial of justice and peace in Palestine.

There are those who say, "It's not our business." But this Congress knows: there are no bystanders in the 21st century. There are no curious on-lookers. There is no one who is not affected by the division and hatred that is present in our world.

Some will say: "This is not the core issue in the Middle East." I come here today as your friend to tell you that this is the core issue. And this core issue is not only producing severe consequences for our region, it is producing severe consequences for our world.

The security of all nations and the stability of our global economy are directly affected by the Middle East conflict. Across oceans, this conflict has estranged societies that should be friends. I meet Muslims thousands of miles away who have a deep, personal response to the suffering of the Palestinian people. They want to know how it is that ordinary Palestinians are still without rights and without a country. They ask whether the West really means what it says about equality and respect and universal justice.

Yes, my friends, today I must speak. I cannot be silent.

Sixty years of Palestinian dispossession, 40 years under occupation, a stop-and-go peace process, all this has left a bitter legacy of disappointment and despair on all sides. It is time to create a new and different legacy, one that begins right now; one that can set a positive tone for the American and Middle East relationship; one that can restore hope to our region's people, to your people, and to the people of this precious world. Nothing can achieve that more effectively, nothing can assert America's moral vision more clearly, nothing can reach and teach the world's youth more directly than your leadership in a peace process that delivers results not next year, not in 5 years, but this year.

How do we get there? Not by a solution imposed by one side. A lasting peace can only be built on understanding, agreement and compromise.

It begins with courage and vision. We, all of us, must take risks for peace. The Arab states recognized that reality in 2002, when we unanimously approved the Arab Peace Initiative. It puts forward a path for both sides to achieve what people want and need: a collective peace treaty with Israel and normal relations with every Arab state, collective security guarantees for all the countries of the region, including Israel, an end to the conflict, a dream every Israeli citizen has longed for

since the creation of Israel, and an agreed solution to the refugee problem, a withdrawal from Arab territories occupied since 1967, and a sovereign, viable, and independent Palestine.

The commitment we made in the Arab Peace Initiative is real. And our states are involved in ongoing efforts to advance a fair, just, and comprehensive peace. His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia initiated the 2002 proposal. Today, he continues to rally international support. Momentum is also building among Muslim countries outside the Arab world. Ten days ago, in Islamabad, the foreign ministers of key Muslim states met. They came together to assure Palestinians and Israelis that they are not alone, that we back their effort to make and build peace.

The goal must be a peace in which all sides gain. It must be anchored in security and opportunity for all.

It must be a peace that will free young Palestinians to focus on a future of progress and prosperity.

It must be a peace that makes Israel a part of the neighborhood, a neighborhood that extends from the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, across the breadth of the southern Mediterranean, to the coast of the Indian Ocean.

It must be a peace that enables the entire region to look forward with excitement and hope, putting its resources into productive growth, partnering across borders to advance development, finding opportunities, and solving common challenges.

This goal is visionary, but, my friends, it is attainable. History shows that longtime adversaries can define new relationships of peace and cooperation. The groundwork for a comprehensive, final settlement is already in place. At Taba, as in the Geneva Accords, the parties have outlined the parameters of the solution.

But we need all hands on deck. The international community, especially the United States, must be engaged in moving the process forward to achieve real results. Above all, we must make our process serve our purpose. We must achieve an agreed solution to the conflict.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Honorable Members, your responsibility today is paramount. Your potential to help Palestinians and Israelis find peace is unrivaled. This is because the people of the region still regard the United States as the key to peace, the one country most capable of bringing the two sides closer together, holding them accountable, and making a just settlement reality.

Time after time, there has been progress towards peace when Americans have actively engaged. Camp David, Madrid, Wye River, nearly every breakthrough was accomplished when America was determined to help the parties succeed.

On behalf of all those who seek and strive for peace in my part of the world, I ask you now to exert that

leadership once again. We ask you to join with us in a historic effort of courage and vision. We ask you to hear our call, to honor the spirit of King Hussein and Yitzhak Rabin, and help fulfill the aspirations of Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace today.

Let me reaffirm that Jordan is committed to playing a positive role in the peace process. It is part of our larger commitment to global coexistence and progress. Ours is an Islamic country with a proud record of diversity, moderation, and shared respect.

Allow me to say, we thank the Congress and the administration for supporting Jordan's progress and development. I deeply value the partnership between our peoples, and the contributions of so many Americans to the future of our country.

My friends, "A decent respect for the rights and dignity of all nations, large and small." That's how President Roosevelt—the great FDR—described the basis of American foreign policy. He pledged American support for the four freedoms, freedom from fear, from want, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion, everywhere in the world.

The Four Freedoms speech was given right here, before Congress. And that is entirely fitting. Because it is here in the People's House that the voices and values of America have made hope real for so many people.

Today, the people of the Middle East are searching for these four freedoms. Today, the people of the Middle East are searching for new hope, hope for a future of prosperity and peace. We have seen the danger and destruction of violence, hatred, and injustice. But we have also seen what people can achieve when they are empowered, when they break down walls, when they commit to the future. And we know that Middle East peace can be a global beginning, creating new possibilities for our region and the entire world.

We look to you to play a historic role. Eleven American Presidents and 30 American Congresses have already faced this ongoing crisis. For not the future generation, but the generation alive today, let us say together: No more. Let us say together: Let's solve this. Let us say together: Yes, we will achieve this.

No Palestinian father should be helpless to feed his family and build a future for his sons and daughters. No Israeli mother should fear when her child boards a bus. Not one more generation should grow up thinking that violence and conflict are the norm.

As Roosevelt also said, "The justice of morality must and will win in the end." But he knew that it was up to responsible nations to stand up for justice when injustice threatens.

This is our challenge as well. And we must not leave it to another generation to meet this challenge.

Thirteen years ago, my father was here to talk about his hopes for peace. Today, we are talking about a promise that is within our reach.

We can wait no longer and that is why I am here before you. We must work together to restore Palestine, a nation in despair and without hope. We must work together to restore peace, hope and opportunity to the Palestinian people. And in so doing, we will begin a process of building peace, not only throughout the region, but throughout the world. How much more bloodshed and how many more lives will it cost for this grave situation to be resolved?

I say: No more bloodshed and no more lives pointlessly taken.

The young boy, traveling to school with his brother in Palestine, let him have a life of peace.

The mother, watching with fear as her children board a bus in Israel, let her have a life of peace.

The father in Lebanon, working hard to provide an education for his children, let him have a life of peace.

The little girl, born in Iraq, with her wide eyes full of wonder, let her have a life of peace.

The family, together eating their evening meal, in Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Europe, Australia, and the Middle East, let them all have a life of peace.

Today my friends, we must speak. We cannot be silent.

The next time a Jordanian, a Palestinian, or an Israeli comes before you, let it be to say: Thank you for helping peace become a reality.

Peace be upon you.

Thank you very much.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

At 11 o'clock and 35 minutes a.m., His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, accompanied by the committee of escort, retired from the Hall of the House of Representatives.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms escorted the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps from the Chamber.

JOINT MEETING DISSOLVED

The SPEAKER. The purpose of the joint meeting having been completed, the Chair declares the joint meeting of the two Houses now dissolved.

Accordingly, at 11 o'clock and 38 minutes a.m., the joint meeting of the two Houses was dissolved.

The Members of the Senate retired to their Chamber.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The House will continue in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1218

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SCHIFF) at 12 o'clock and 18 minutes p.m.

PRINTING OF PROCEEDINGS HAD DURING RECESS

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the proceedings during the recess be printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain one-minutes, 15 minutes per side.

THE IMPERATIVE OF PEACE

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago we heard King Abdullah of Jordan declare the imperative of peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians as central to assuring peace not only in the Middle East but throughout the world.

Speaking not only of Israelis and Palestinians but of Lebanese and Iraqis and of people all over the world, King Abdullah said, "Let them have a life of peace."

Indeed, it is our responsibility as leaders of the United States to respond to such an eloquent call by creating a restart of the peace process, which brings security, justice and peace to both Palestinians and Israelis.

When our brothers and sisters are killing each other, it is for us to use the power of compassion and love so that all may survive and prosper in security and peace.

This is a good moment for us to make a restart. This is a good moment for us to create a new context. This is a good moment for us to join with King Abdullah in speaking of people in the Middle East and throughout the world and saying, "Let them have a life of peace."

BRAC FUNDING

(Mrs. DRAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I visited Walter Reed Army Medical Center, including outpatient residence Building 18.

Despite Walter Reed's status on the BRAC list, there is no excuse for offering anything but world-class patient care to our returning wounded warriors.

According to the BRAC Commission, Bethesda Naval Medical will take on the important mission currently handled by Walter Reed in 2011. Yet, only 5 weeks ago, the majority decided to take away \$3 billion from the BRAC ac-

count that is needed to allow them to build the facilities to take on this overwhelming responsibility.

I have asked the question then, and 5 weeks later have yet to have an answer, where is the money for BRAC and when will the money be restored for patient care for our men and women returning from battle?

SONIC FOUNDRY

(Ms. BALDWIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize one of Wisconsin's own, the Sonic Foundry Company, for its well-deserved attention as leaders of the company rang the opening bell to start the NASDAQ trading day this morning.

Sonic Foundry is an example of a company excelling in innovation. Its Web technology is transforming business, government and educational institutions by allowing people to receive critical information and share knowledge. Their Mediasite technology is trusted by Fortune 500 companies, educational institutions and government agencies. In Wisconsin, use of this technology saved the State's budget \$800,000 in its first year of use.

Sonic Foundry's Mediasite technology also allows the exchange of video greetings and interactive content to be passed between separated family members. Military families have been provided this service for free during holiday occasions.

Wisconsin is proud of Sonic Foundry's accomplishments.

DIRECTO A MEXICO

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government is helping and encouraging illegals in this country to send money south of the border. Here is how it works.

The Federal Reserve, in a program called Directo a Mexico, allows illegals that have no Social Security numbers and no American IDs to send billions of dollars through U.S. banks to Mexico.

The Federal Reserve, also at taxpayer expense, provides banks with promotional marketing propaganda in Spanish so as to appeal to the ever-growing illegal population. This untaxed money to Mexico is about \$23 billion a year and a drain on the United States economy.

The banks make a profit off the illegals and their transfers. It is all about banking greed. These transactions should be taxed, and the banks should be required to collect the taxes.

Keep some of that money in the United States to pay for all the social services that illegals obtain and don't pay for. Banks should not be in the business of helping illegals in the United States send money anywhere,

and neither should our Federal Government, for that matter. But banking greed seems to rule the day.

And that's just the way it is.

WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

(Mr. CARNAHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I stand today for our veterans. The American public has heard the revelations of poor conditions at Walter Reed and other military medical centers around the country.

The fact that we are not providing adequate support and resources for the brave men and women who fought for our country is a national disgrace. We must ensure soldiers have the training, resources and care while in combat and when they return home.

Next week, I will be visiting Walter Reed to talk to administrators and patients about the care our veterans are receiving. I will also visit Jefferson Barracks and the John Cochran Hospital in Missouri. By evaluating our current facilities, we can determine the strengths to build upon and weaknesses to address.

I remain determined to ensure our veterans are receiving the care and support they have earned and been promised, and I call upon every Member of this House to join in fighting for those who have fought for us.

FISCAL YEAR 2008 BUDGET

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, next week we will mark up the budget for fiscal year 2008. That budget will set the tone for the year and will affect the fiscal direction of our country.

Simply chasing higher spending with higher taxes, as the Democrats want, fails to address the unsustainable growth of government spending. Also, entitlement spending currently consumes more than half the budget and is projected to grow by nearly 6 percent per year, faster than the entire government costs now. We must take immediate and substantive steps to ensure we can meet commitments in the future.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans will put forth a budget that balances the budget by 2012, without raising taxes, by keeping our economy strong, creating jobs and by reforming and strengthening entitlement programs.

Let's work together to balance the budget, but let's make sure we do it the right way. The question will be answered this month, which is, will Democrats work with us toward these goals or go back to the days of tax and spend?

DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS PROVIDING PROPER OVERSIGHT OF POOR TREATMENT OF WOUNDED SOLDIERS

(Mr. HARE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, the American people are rightfully outraged by the stories coming out of Walter Reed.

On Monday, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee held its first hearing at Walter Reed to determine how long these problems have been going on and how best we can fix the problems as soon as possible. Three other hearings are scheduled throughout the week.

But this administration has some tough questions to answer. First, when did they know that wounded military personnel were not receiving the treatment they deserve? The President said he wasn't aware of these problems until the Washington Post investigation, but several GAO reports have been released outlining some of these problems. Was the administration ignoring these reports or just ignoring the problem?

And, second, why did the administration choose to privatize services at Walter Reed? And how did they go about choosing a company with ties to Halliburton?

Our soldiers deserve better, and I am confident that this Congress will provide the necessary oversight so that we can fix these problems immediately.

FIRST AMENDMENT AND FREEDOM OF THE PRESS ARE STILL BEHIND BARS

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, if there is anything we learned from the conviction of Vice Presidential aide Scooter Libby yesterday, it is that the first amendment and the freedom of the press are still behind bars. The need for a Federal media shield bill has never been more apparent.

Yesterday, Mr. Libby was convicted of lying to a grand jury. That is reprehensible, and he will be held to the strictest account.

But as the Washington Post editorial page pointed out this morning, his chief accuser, Joe Wilson, also lied about who sent him to Africa, what he found there, and about whether his wife was a covert CIA agent. The Washington Post even called Joe Wilson today a "blowhard."

Ironically, while Mr. Wilson was lying to the press and creating a partisan furor, Mr. Libby was telling the truth to reporters, and that is what got him in trouble.

The case presented us with a long spectacle of reporters being jailed and threatened with jail time for not re-

vealing confidential sources. Because there is no Federal media shield law, the real losers in all of this difficult and tragic case are not actually reporters or the press, but the American public.

My own colleague, Congressman RICK BOUCHER, and I will be reintroducing the Free Flow of Information Act. I urge my colleagues in Congress to take it up expeditiously. It is time to restore the fabric of the first amendment freedom of the press.

GI BILL

(Mr. CARNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our Nation's veterans. The GI bill has provided education to many of our Nation's fine, honorable men and women. Unfortunately, there is a provision which excludes our National Guard and Reserve from receiving their GI bill benefits after they have left the military.

I have introduced bipartisan legislation, H.R. 1330, which will give the National Guard and Reserve members up to 10 years to take advantage of their GI bill education benefits. This proposal is similar to the benefits extended to active duty members of the military right now.

This bill extends a much-deserved and needed benefit to our troops. Because the National Guard and Reserve are playing an ever-increasing role in combat operations, they are finding it harder to achieve their educational goals while they are enlisted. This bill will better allow troops to serve their country honorably and then reward them with higher education when they return.

The National Guard and Reserve are becoming indistinguishable from the active duty now. They are in need of this benefit. We owe this to our troops and to our military families back home.

I urge all Members of Congress who care about our troops and military families to sign on to this legislation.

□ 1230

WE MUST LIVE UP TO OUR OBLIGATIONS TO THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED OUR NATION

(Mr. TURNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I participated in a Government Reform hearing at Walter Reed Hospital.

During that hearing, we heard from soldiers wounded in the defense of our Nation and their families. Like most Americans, I was disappointed and saddened by what we learned. What we heard represents an absolute failure of military leadership and accountability.

Defense Secretary Gates has called for a review of all service branch medical facilities. Yesterday, the President announced the creation of a bipartisan commission to examine all U.S. military and veterans care facilities. The commission will be headed by former Senator Bob Dole and former Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala.

In addition to the Government Reform Committee, I serve on the House Armed Services Committee and on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. Both committees have upcoming hearings on the care and condition of soldiers at Walter Reed Hospital.

We take seriously the health care of those who have provided service to our Nation. There is no excuse for what happened at Walter Reed Hospital. We must live up to our obligations to those who have served our Nation at such personal sacrifice.

HONORING OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR TROOPS

(Ms. SHEA-PORTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, honoring our soldiers means honoring our commitment to these soldiers.

Supporting the troops means several things: It meant, first of all, making sure that the mission was essential to the United States before putting them in harm's way. Secondly, it meant making sure, if they were in harm's way, they had the equipment that they needed. And, third, after they had borne the battle, we had an obligation, if we were going to support the troops, by providing medical care for them. This administration has failed on all three levels.

How did this VA medical care disaster happen? This is absolutely shameful. In a House hearing on Monday, the top military brass said there was enough money in the budget to provide care. So what was the problem here? Was it a lack of real support for the troops?

This administration owes these soldiers and their families an apology and a pledge to start really supporting the troops.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET AND HOMELAND SECURITY

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, the President's fiscal year 2008 budget perpetuates more of the same wrong priorities that have failed the American people over the past 6 years.

One of the most egregious offenses of his proposed budget this year is that, while he calls for nearly \$2 trillion in tax cuts for the wealthy over the next 10 years, he once again refuses to fully fund our homeland security programs. In fact, his budget provides only a 1

percent increase, despite numerous unmet homeland security needs.

The President drastically cuts grants to first responders, State homeland security and firefighter assistance, and eliminates programs like local law enforcement terrorism prevention, staffing for adequate fire and emergency response, and metropolitan medical response. He even freezes funding to secure critical infrastructure needs like our ports, railways, and transit systems.

Mr. Speaker, giving tax breaks to the wealthy at the expense of protecting the homeland is not the priority of most Americans. Democrats will fight for a budget that makes keeping our Nation safe a top priority.

THE DEPLORABLE CONDITIONS AT WALTER REED

(Mr. HALL of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, the situation at Walter Reed Medical Center is an embarrassment to our country. The deplorable conditions for outpatient care at Walter Reed are not fit for men and women who have sacrificed to serve our country. The delayed and mishandled care of these individuals has harmed their recovery and placed significant strain on their families.

This is not the way our combat veterans deserve to be treated. These conditions demonstrate a catastrophic failure of planning on the part of the administration.

Although the Army has stated its intention to remedy the situation quickly, we must act for those who are currently held at Walter Reed, for it is clear that the Army is not currently equipped to do so. It is unacceptable for those who served us abroad to languish in a no man's land at home.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming days I will introduce a bill to allow Walter Reed outpatients the option of moving to a VA facility closer to their homes and families while still getting their military pay and benefits. We must show that our country supports our troops not only in word but also in action.

THE ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN CRISIS

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes ago, Mr. Speaker, the King of Jordan offered a challenge to America and the world to allow Palestinian children and Israeli children to live in peace, as well as children around the world.

I for one, Mr. Speaker, accept the challenge and cite this government and particularly this administration for its slowness and its inattentiveness to the crisis and the solution and resolution

of a roadmap for peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

The King was right. In 2002, the Arab states did stand up and offer suggestions. Many of them may not have been those that we might have agreed with, but it is important, Mr. Speaker, that we now come to the table for the crisis is spiraling out of control. People are dying. Children are without opportunities. And the Iraq war only fuels the fire of dissent and confusion.

It is time now for our soldiers to come home. It is time now for us to take leadership in the Palestinian and Israeli crisis. And, yes, it is time now for us to treat our soldiers at Walter Reed and elsewhere with dignity. I join my colleagues in that fight for soldiers and for peace.

CALLING FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOR THOSE IMPACTED BY THE TORNADO IN DESHA COUNTY

(Mr. ROSS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, on February 24, a tornado hit Dumas in Desha County, Arkansas. The Governor called out the National Guard for nearly a week. For 6 days, there was no electricity to this delta county. 650 people remain out of work because their workplace has been severely damaged or destroyed, and 150 homes were either heavily damaged or destroyed. And here we are more than a week later still waiting for the President and the Director of FEMA to declare this forgotten delta county a Federal Disaster Area. In fact, the FEMA spokesman, John Philbin, in the Arkansas News Bureau, Stevens Media, is quoted today in an Aaron Sadler story as saying "The damages or need for Federal assistance are not readily apparent."

Mr. Speaker, the people at FEMA certainly did not visit the same Dumas and Desha County that I did. The people of Dumas and Desha County need the help of the Federal Government, and I implore the President and the Director of FEMA to assist this forgotten delta county.

□ 1240

WATER QUALITY INVESTMENT ACT OF 2007

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 214 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 214

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 569) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to authorize appropriations for sewer overflow control grants. The first reading of the bill

shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII and except pro forma amendments for the purpose of debate. Each amendment so printed may be offered only by the Member who caused it to be printed or his designee and shall be considered as read. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI) is recognized for 1 hour.

(Ms. MATSUI asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida, my good friend, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART. All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 214 provides for consideration of H.R. 569, the Water Quality Investment Act of 2007, under an open rule with a preprinting requirement. The rule provides for 1 hour of general debate, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill except for clauses 9 and 10 of rule XXI.

The rule makes in order the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure amendment in the nature of a substitute now printed in the bill as an original bill for the purpose of amendment, which shall be considered as read. The rule provides that any amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute must be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD prior to consideration of the bill. Finally, the rule provides one mo-

tion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, as I just stated, House Resolution 214 is an open rule. This is the third open rule recommended by the Rules Committee during the 110th Congress. The committee's fourth open rule will be considered on the floor tomorrow.

The Democratic majority is backing up its commitment to greater openness with real action. The Rules Committee's two prior open rules permitted Members to offer 19 amendments on the floor. The House adopted the overwhelming majority of them. It goes to show the Members often can improve legislation when given the opportunity; and I am sure that we will have a good debate today, also.

The underlying legislation made in order under this rule represents a long-overdue, necessary investment in our Nation's clean water infrastructure. The Water Quality Investment Act provides sorely needed funding for cities and States to upgrade combined sewer systems.

Mr. Speaker, we all take our sewer systems for granted. Most of our country's wastewater infrastructure is out of sight and, for the majority of our constituents, it is out of mind as well. But once these sewers back up and overflow into our streets and rivers, sewers become an urgent issue.

Combined sewers are an older technology. They were built back when it made sense to collect wastewater and storm runoff in the same pipes. They do not have the same capacity of more modern infrastructure. During heavy storms, they often back up and overflow. When this happens, untreated wastewater stagnates in our streets and pollutes our rivers. Raw sewage seeps into basements, public parks and other areas where young children play. Public health is severely impacted.

The long-term investment fallout can be even worse. My hometown of Sacramento struggles with the problems posed by combined sewers. During the heavy winter storms which periodically sweep through California, these sewers in our central city can overflow. When this happens, over 500,000 gallons of wastewater flow into our public waterways and neighborhoods.

My constituents already face dangers of flooding from the two large rivers which ring our city. They should not have to worry about additional flooding from our underground sewers.

This problem is not unique to Sacramento. Over 700 cities across the country have combined sewer systems. These cities need help from the Federal Government to undertake the costly task of upgrading their infrastructure. A vote for this bill before us today is an investment in the health of these cities and towns all throughout our country.

I would like to thank Chairman OBERSTAR for the focus he has shown in shepherding this bill through the Transportation and Infrastructure

Committee. This bill became trapped in committee under the previous majority. I think we are all happy to see it finally make it to the floor under the new majority.

We all have a stake in keeping our infrastructure up to date and protecting our constituents' health. Upgrading combined sewers today will do both of these things. I urge all Members to pass this fair and open rule and to support the underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my good friend, the gentlewoman from California, for the time.

Mr. Speaker, American taxpayers have invested billions in sewage treatment infrastructure, resulting in decades of progress in reducing waterborne illness from contaminated drinking water and beach closures and shellfish bed closures.

Unfortunately, whenever there is an accidental breach in sewage treatment facilities, we see the repercussions of polluted water to human health, to our communities, and also to important industries such as tourism. That is why it is sound economic and environmental policy to invest in effective sewage treatment that ensures that the United States has a healthy and vibrant aquatic ecosystem and clean water.

But the costs for these sewer systems is very expensive. In 2003, the Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department in my community evaluated its wastewater needs through the year 2020 and determined that in order to maintain adequate transmission systems capability, treatment, disposal and the prevention of sanitary sewer overflows that department alone would have to spend over \$2 billion.

The cause of many sanitary sewer overflow events is that the infrastructure is failing due to structural deterioration and corrosion. Federal funding, such as is provided in this legislation, could give an additional incentive to proactively identify the infrastructure requiring replacement prior to failure.

In 2000, Congress amended the Clean Water Act to add section 221. Section 221 authorized appropriations of \$750 billion for each of fiscal years 2002 and 2003 to the Environmental Protection Agency to make grants to States and municipalities for controlling combined sewer overflows and sanitary sewer overflows. This authorization was conditioned upon the receipt of at least \$1.3 billion in appropriations for the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Funds. No funds were appropriated for sewer overflow grants in either fiscal year 2002 or 2003.

This legislation that we bring to the floor today reauthorizes section 221 of the Clean Water Act which provides authority to help municipalities and

States control combined sewer overflows and sanitary sewer overflows. Grants provided by this bill will help keep our water safe and healthy and will also keep our ecosystem clean of wastewater.

I know the majority party likes to pat themselves on the back for bringing another bill under a modified open rule. I wish to point out for the record that, once again, the majority does so only on bills that are clearly non-controversial.

Let's take a close look at the bills that they previously allowed to be considered under an open rule. Both were clearly bipartisan bills, each of which was originally authorized by the Republican whip, Mr. BLUNT. One passed the House of Representatives unanimously, the other by voice vote.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that if the majority really wants to live up to its campaign promise of more open process, they should provide open rules on bills that would be a bit more debatable.

Mr. Speaker, nonetheless, I strongly support the underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1250

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, wastewater infrastructure may not be the most glamorous of issues. Nonetheless, it is an important one for the health of our environment and our constituents.

No American should have to walk outside after a storm to see sewage in the streets. None of our constituents should have to fear that swimming or boating in rivers will expose them to industrial waste. Unfortunately, the sad truth is that our country's combined sewers are not up to the task of cleaning our waters.

The good news is that the underlying bill made in order under this open rule will help our local municipalities fix this problem. It is an opportunity to invest in our national infrastructure, protect our environment, and secure our public health.

I urge a "yes" vote on the previous question and on the rule.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. MATSUI). Pursuant to House Resolution 214 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 569.

□ 1255

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the

consideration of the bill (H.R. 569) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to authorize appropriations for sewer overflow control grants, with Mr. SCHIFF in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) and the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Today, the House will consider the first of three bills reported from the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure that seek to improve overall water quality of this Nation.

The first bill is H.R. 569, the Water Quality Investment Act of 2007, sponsored by a former committee colleague, Mr. PASCRELL, as well as Mr. CAMP and Mr. CAPUANO.

This legislation authorizes \$1.8 billion in Federal grants over the next 5 years to address combined sewer overflows and sanitary sewer overflows nationwide. CSOs and SSOs are overflows of untreated waste that can occur during wet weather events as a result of poor maintenance, deteriorating infrastructure, or inadequate incapacity. These overflows are significant concerns for public health and safety because they often result in discharges of raw sewage into neighboring rivers, streets, beaches and basements.

In the first year of authorization, H.R. 569 requires the administrator to make grants directly to municipalities on a competitive basis. For fiscal years 2009 and thereafter, the bill directs the administrator to establish a funding formula, after notice and comment, that allocates to each State a proportional share of grant funding based on the total needs of the State to address CSOs and SSOs within its borders.

States would be responsible for awarding grants to municipalities using these allocated funds. I applaud the tireless efforts of Congressmen PASCRELL, CAMP and CAPUANO in advocating for increased funding to address CSOs and SSOs.

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has twice approved legislation to reauthorize appropriations for this important effort. It is my hope that this year Congress will finally approve legislation and forward it to the President for his signature.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation which is both vital and overdue.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 569 reauthorizes grants to help communities address the widespread problem in our country of sewer overflows.

As a result of inadequate or outdated wastewater infrastructure, raw sewage can overflow into rivers or back up into people's basements, and this has been a nationwide problem.

To correct these problems, local communities will have to make infrastructure investments totaling as much as \$150 billion. To provide communities some assistance to meet these needs, H.R. 569 authorizes additional resources for EPA to make sewer overflow control grants to States and local communities. This was a program that was authorized before and is now needing reauthorization. I urge all Members to support this bill.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL) such time as he may consume.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentlewoman from California and the gentleman from Louisiana, and I want to commend Congressman CAMP from Michigan for being a stalwart in this area. It has taken us a long time, a few years. We have had bipartisan support in the past, Mr. Chairman, but we aim to put closure on this at this time.

Mr. Chairman, the EPA estimates that the Nation's wastewater infrastructure will face a funding shortfall of between 300 and \$400 billion over the next 20 years. That should give us pause because of all the work and help from both sides of the aisle in protecting our waterways.

□ 1300

I am very proud to rise today in strong support of this bill, the Water Quality Investment Act, H.R. 569. I want to thank Mr. OBERSTAR, chairman of the Transportation Committee, and, of course, Ranking Member MICA and Chairwoman JOHNSON and Ranking Member BAKER for helping to get this bill on the floor.

Congressman CAMP and I have pursued this issue for many years, as I have said, in order to authorize the wastewater infrastructure funding that our cities and towns so badly need; and, Mr. Chairman, I might add, there are 30 mayors in the House. We need a little bit of that mayor persuasion and touch to deal with a lot of problems that we face on this floor, both domestically and internationally. The mayors know every day what they face on 24/7 and in the community, every community, be it large or small. Because you cannot see something, people forget about how significant it is.

I also want to thank Congressman CAPUANO and others in this worthy endeavor.

H.R. 569 has garnered co-sponsorship from both sides and was unanimously

voted out of committee and was even reported out of committee during the past two Congresses for the simple reason that combined sewer overflows and sanitary soil overflows affect millions of people in each and every State in the Union. We are talking about affecting the lives of over 40 million people here in what we are doing to today.

The United States' antiquated wastewater infrastructure is deteriorating. State and local governments are often unable to stop sewage and untreated waste from flowing into the streets, into basements, into rivers and into lakes. So all the work that we have done on making our water clean is being undone if we do not attack these two major problems.

Combined sewer systems found mainly in older cities are one source of these overflows. A total of 772 municipalities throughout America would serve these 40 million which I just spoke of.

My home State of New Jersey has 31 combined sewer systems, water, sanitation coming together at over 200 discharge points throughout the State. Many of those discharges, including several in my own town of Paterson, New Jersey, flow into the Passaic River, a heavily polluted waterway in the heart of my district.

Sanitary sewer systems often overflow as well, releasing untreated waste into our environment, closing our beaches, we have been famous for that, too, New Jersey, and contaminating highways, waterways and drinking water supplies. In 2003, New Jersey closed over 30,000 acres of classified shellfish growing areas due to a large sanitary sewer overflow.

Upgrading these sewer systems is extremely expensive. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the total cost of repairing the combined sewer systems in America will be about \$51 billion. The price tag for fixing the U.S. sanitary sewer systems hovers around \$89 billion. We are talking about \$140 billion.

As a former mayor, I know that wet weather issues are one of the most pressing issues facing urban America. Cities are doing their best to increase capacity and upgrade facilities with the resources they have, but they need our help.

Most communities with combined sewer overflow problems have fewer than 10,000 people. They cannot afford to impose more fees and taxes upon struggling residents who have borne the vast majority of costs associated with sewer overflows. If we impose a Federal mandate demanding clean water, we must follow up with the Federal ability to pay.

As the spring rains loom on the horizon, we cannot let small communities throughout this country shoulder this tremendous burden alone.

This bill authorizes \$1.8 billion for Federal grants from the EPA over a 5-year period. Although it is only a drop in the bucket compared to what we

really need, it should provide some relief to our municipalities; and it sends a signal that we really mean business this year and that we are doing that business on a bipartisan basis and that that is the only business we should be about on the important problems facing Americans.

I want to wholeheartedly thank the Speaker and the majority leader and the rest of the House leadership for addressing legislation this week that will provide immeasurable benefit to communities throughout this country to help have clean, safe water for their residents.

I applaud Chairman OBERSTAR for his leadership and wish to express my constituents' sincere gratitude for his action on this important issue. This truly has been bipartisan legislation. This is what we talk about and so infrequently implement.

So I thank the minority side, the majority side, wherever that line is, who knows, and I say this is a good piece of legislation.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to my friend, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP). He is a cosponsor of this legislation and has authored similar legislation in previous Congresses.

Mr. CAMP of Michigan. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 569, the Water Quality Investment Act. I want to thank Representative PASCRELL for introducing this bipartisan legislation. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this bill. I authored similar legislation in the last two Congresses.

Sewer maintenance is a serious problem for Michigan and the Fourth Congressional District. Many of the sewers in this country, including several in my State, were built during the 19th century. The problems associated with old sewer lines are especially rampant in low-lying coastal areas such as Michigan, where water runoff collects.

Sewer overflows discharge untreated or partially treated human and industrial waste, toxic materials, debris and disease-causing organisms into the environment and pose a grave threat to the environment and public health. In 2005, there were over 1,000 reported sewer overflows across the State of Michigan. These events spilled 20 billion, and I repeat 20 billion, gallons of sewage and wastewater onto the ground and into rivers, lakes and streams.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the total cost for repairing every sewer line in the country is \$140 billion. Local governments clearly cannot fix this mess alone and meet their obligations under the Clean Water Act.

The Water Quality Investment Act goes a long way toward ending the public health and environmental crisis associated with sewer overflows by au-

thorizing Federal funds to repair and replace outdated systems. I urge my colleagues to approve H.R. 569 today.

I would like to thank those individuals who helped move this legislation forward, including Mr. PASCRELL, the sponsor, and for his long support of this legislation; Mr. OBERSTAR, the chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee; and Mr. MICA, the ranking member of this committee.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KAGEN).

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Chairman, I am proud to cosponsor legislation that will stop pollution from sewer overflows and preserve our clean water everywhere.

Today, I rise in support of H.R. 569, the Water Quality Investment Act. This important legislation will authorize grants to municipalities and States to reduce combined sewer overflows and sanitary sewer overflows in our Nation's water supplies.

Everyone should be glad that we are ensuring clean water is a top priority, not just for our families but for our Nation and certainly for every citizen in Wisconsin.

I am pleased that this Congress is addressing this serious problem and this challenge that our Nation's water and sewerage infrastructure poses. This legislation, along with the other water bills offered later this week, will finally begin to update and repair the outdated and aging systems that have been ignored for far too long.

By adding this critical funding to the Clean Water Act, we will ensure the communities like those in my northeastern Wisconsin district, who would otherwise be unable to upgrade their aging sewer systems, will have the necessary funding to do so.

CSO and SSO overflows in the Great Lakes are a particularly serious impact on all the health of everyone living in our region.

□ 1310

Our environmental stability and the economic prosperity of the region depend upon clean water. I am proud to cosponsor this legislation that will aid communities and municipalities. In eliminating overflow pollution, it will create separate sewage and storm water flows.

I also wish to thank Chairman OBERSTAR and Chairwoman JOHNSON for bringing this important legislation to the floor.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to my friend from Tennessee, a senior member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Mr. DUNCAN.

Mr. DUNCAN chaired the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee in the previous Congress and has been a leader on this issue.

Mr. DUNCAN. I certainly want to first thank Dr. BOUSTANY for yielding

me this time and for his hard work on this legislation. As he mentioned, I had the privilege of chairing the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee for 6 years, for the past 6 years, and he served as my vice chairman during part of that time. I appreciate his work.

I also want to salute my really good friend, Congresswoman EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, whom I admire and respect so much, and who was my ranking member of that subcommittee and now serves as the full chairman.

I want to also commend Congressman BILL PASCRELL, the gentleman from New Jersey, who has been interested in this issue for several years, as has my colleague, the gentleman from Michigan, Mr. CAMP, and who are the primary sponsors of this legislation.

Mr. Chairman, I have said many times that there is nothing that the people of this country take for granted as much as they do our clean water and waste water systems in this country that are so very important, first of all, to our environment, our public health, but also to our economy.

We have environmental extremists in this country who don't want us to cut any trees, dig for any coal, drill for any oil or produce any natural gas, and they basically want to shut our whole economy down. I don't go along with their agenda, but I can tell you that this bill is one of the most important bills that we could do for the environment. Those who really care about the environment should be over here in strong support of this bill.

The water infrastructure network has done some real yeoman's work in regard to the needs of this country, in this regard, for the last few years, and they have estimated that we have needs over the next 20 years or so of over \$400 billion in our clean water and waste water systems in this country.

This bill and the other two bills we will take up later this week certainly are very important, and they are good starts in alleviating some of this problem. It has been said that we have spent more from a Federal level on the water system in Iraq over the last 4 years than we have spent from the Federal level on the water systems in this country. Certainly more money has been spent in this country on our water systems, but that has been done by the ratepayers and the local and State governments.

There is an important Federal role in this regard because people in California drink the water in Tennessee and vice versa. We have a mobile society, and there is an important role for this Congress to play and for our Federal Government to play in this regard.

I think this bill is a good start in the right direction, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation. There are going to be, I think, two or three amendments offered from our side to make the bill a little more fiscally conservative, and, certainly, I have no objection to that.

But we need to pass this legislation, because, as Mr. CAMP said, there is a lot of this water infrastructure in our country, both waste water and clean water, that dates back to the 19th century. We need a lot of work if we are going to have the water systems and the kind of country that our people want us to have.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of New York. I want to thank my colleague and friend from New Jersey for introducing this important legislation, and I wish to commend Chairman OBERSTAR and Chairwoman JOHNSON for their leadership in moving this bill to the floor.

Mr. Chairman, this bill is extremely important to my district, which is bordered by water on three sides. Each year, many of my constituents and millions of other Americans are sickened by swimming in water contaminated by sewer overflows. This inadequately treated sewage is filled with bacteria and viruses.

Also, the cumulative costs from sewer systems result in thousands of days of closed beaches at a cost of billions of dollars due to swimming-related illnesses. The impact of such contamination to my district, with over 300 miles of coastline, can be devastating to the fishing and tourist economies that depend upon clean water and healthy beaches.

According to the EPA, an estimated 850 billion gallons of raw sewage and industrial waste escape each year much of it into public waters. Unfortunately, despite this obvious need, the President's fiscal 2008 budget cuts infrastructure funding by \$400 million or 36.6 percent. It is my hope that our budget resolution and our appropriators will override this cut.

Yet many Americans do not become aware of sewage leaks until they show up on a closed beach or, worse yet, are made ill because many sewer systems do not routinely monitor to detect sewer overflows or report those that do occur to environmental or public health agencies.

This bill authorizes \$1.8 billion over the next 5 years for grants to prevent dangerous sewer overflows. More needs to be done, but this is a good first step. Vote for this bill, protect the health of our Nation's beachgoers and protect our environment.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentlelady from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. I certainly appreciate the gentleman for yielding some time to me here today.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in very strong, extremely strong support of this particular piece of legislation we are looking at today, the Water Quality Investment Act of 2007. I am actually a brand new member of the Transportation and

Infrastructure Committee this term, but I have wanted to get on this committee ever since I came to Congress, and it is particularly because of issues like this that we are talking about today.

My home State of Michigan actually has more shoreline than any other State in the Nation, except Alaska. If you think of the mitten of Michigan and think of the Great Lakes, of course, surrounding, fresh water and clean water and the Great Lakes, I mean, we are the Great Lakes State. It is an economic impetus for us. It really is our very identity.

In fact, the Great Lakes system is actually one-fifth of the fresh water supply of the entire planet. Sometimes people don't recognize that, but they are one-fifth of the fresh water supply of the world. In my area, in the Detroit area, actually, there are over 5 million Americans just right there in southeast Michigan who are drafting their fresh water supply from the Great Lakes, and, of course, the Canadians on the other side, our great neighbors to the north as well. But these waters are absolutely a national treasure, and I think we need to do everything that we possibly can within our power to preserve them and to protect them.

Of course, one of the great problems is that many of the communities along the shoreline have very, very old, very antiquated infrastructure. It is decaying infrastructure; it is not right sized. It has all the problems that are not particularly inherent to a city like Detroit or an area like southeast Michigan.

We see it all around the Nation, particularly in our industrialized areas there, and we have not been capable, or we have not had the political will, I should say, of spending the dollars to keep up with the growth with our underground infrastructure. Of course, people don't see the underground infrastructure a lot of times. We are not thinking about it as we should.

Local communities, of course, are struggling with declining tax dollars. In Michigan, we are having a huge amount of decline in State revenue sharing as well. They have very tight budgets, and even though they have had their best efforts, they just have not, the local communities in the State, have not been able to keep up with the infrastructure needs to keep our water quality clean.

We in this Congress have invested tax dollars in so many things that our constituents have questions. Somebody was just mentioning we maybe spent more money on water systems and infrastructure in the country of Iraq than we have in our own Nation in recent years. Some would say that some of the things we do here are not in the national interest. But that is not the case, not the case with this very, very important piece of legislation.

I believe that this legislation will provide vital assistance to States and local communities throughout our entire Nation to meet the critical need,

to keep our water clean and pure. That is a charter that we all share.

Whatever our constituency is, we are the stewards of this fantastic country and magnificent treasures like the Great Lakes or so many other areas around the country, and we need to make sure that we do keep our water clean and pure for our generation as well as the next.

In fact, and let me just mention, several months ago, actually with a Canadian-based research group, we do a lot of work, as you might imagine, in Michigan with our Canadian counterparts there. They were calculating that the United States and Canadian cities dump a combined 24 billion gallons of municipal sewage directly into the water systems each and every year, which is the equivalent of more than 100 Olympic-size swimming pools full of raw sewage each and every day.

□ 1320

In fact, they characterized the study as we were treating our Great Lakes like a toilet is what they said; and, unfortunately, there is a very choking grain of truth to that.

So I certainly support the legislation. I want to commend Chairman OBERSTAR and Ranking Member MICA for bringing it forward. I urge all of my colleagues to support this very bipartisan piece of legislation that is so important to our Nation.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I now recognize Mr. HILL of Indiana for 2 minutes.

(Mr. HILL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILL. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this legislation as well. I applaud the authors and the coauthors for introducing it.

Southern Indiana has the same problem that all communities across the country are having with sewer repairs, and it is good to see that this bipartisan piece of legislation is probably going to pass.

You know, the last time I was home, I was talking to a fellow in one town in southern Indiana that actually had to wear boots in order to mow his lawn in the summertime because of the sewage that was bubbling up.

The city of New Albany, which is right along the Ohio River, is probably going to spend half of its budget revenue on fixing their sewers.

The Environmental Protection Agency approximates that each year combined sewer overflows discharge about 850 billion gallons of wastewater and storm water containing untreated wastes, toxic debris and other pollutants.

Not only New Albany, but other towns in southern Indiana, like Huntingburg, Rockport and Milltown in southern Indiana are having trouble paying for their higher sewer rates; and although they depend on sewer maintenance and repair for economic growth, not to mention basic sanitation issues,

rural communities like these sometimes have difficulty with funding these types of projects because they are so small.

Mr. Chairman, in 2005, there were nearly 400 documented sewer overflows throughout Indiana's Ninth District. I think we can do a lot better than that. That is why I am happy that the House is addressing this issue today. It is time to step up and assist communities in need.

The Water Quality Investment Act would greatly assist communities all over America and in my district to improve water quality and control sewer overflow by authorizing \$1.5 billion in grants to communities over the next 5 years. These communities can use these funds to construct treatment facilities and update aging sewers to deal with the sewer overflows.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support this bill and rise in bipartisan support. Hopefully, it will pass.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Chairman, could you tell us how much time is remaining?

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlewoman from Texas has 15 minutes remaining.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3½ minutes to Mr. BLUMENAUER from the State of Oregon.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I appreciate the gentlewoman's courtesy in permitting me to speak on the bill and commend her leadership.

I had the privilege, for 10 years, of serving on this subcommittee. I miss the work that is being done. But I am pleased that in the first days of this Congress we are moving forward with important bipartisan legislation that can make a huge difference for communities around the country.

The city that I call home, Portland, Oregon, is one of over 1,100 communities around the country with a combined sewer overflow problem. The EPA estimates that there is something like 40,000 discharges of raw sewage that occur each year from sanitary sewer systems with a volume into the billions of gallons each year. In my community, this represents an investment well of over \$1 billion to try and deal with the problems of an antiquated system, much of which was built before 1960; and, compared to what is happening in other parts of the country, that is a modern system.

This is a situation where we, as a country, have long overlooked making the type of systematic investments that are important. I appreciated my colleague, Mr. DUNCAN from Tennessee, who talked about the potential for a \$400 billion shortfall. Well, it is really not clear exactly whether it is \$400 billion, \$500 billion, you pick a number, being able to meet the needs of America's communities that are being stressed, not just by aging systems but by growth and development. Sprawl across the country is putting more and more strain on these inadequate systems at a time when we are finding out

more and more of what needs to be done to protect the public health and infrastructure.

Mr. Chairman, around the world, at any given time half the people are sick needlessly from waterborne disease. In this country, we have had a better record. But we have had problems here, and we are on the edge in many places around the country. I can't say enough about my appreciation for moving forward with this in an expeditious manner.

Unfortunately, other areas of the Federal Government haven't quite caught up to the leadership of the subcommittee bringing this forward. I am sad to note that the administration continues its trend of downplaying this problem with its 2008 budget and its stated opposition to this bill. I am confident that there will be such an overwhelming show of support for it that we will be able to convince others that it is a good investment.

Solving America's water quality issues requires a partnership. Already, State and local jurisdictions are being stressed. We are finding the private sector stepping up and making higher and higher investments. The average rate payer is facing exponential increases.

In my community, in the course of 10 years we are going to double the sewer rates. I met with a group of professionals this last week that said that, at the current rate of expenditure, we could actually have the entire country's GDP devoured by local utility cost for sewer and water. That is not going to happen because of the leadership that we see here now.

I look forward to a strong bipartisan vote in support of it, and I hope that my colleagues will take the time to visit with the hundreds of consulting engineers and local government officials who are on the Hill today to tell them that we have taken a step forward, and we look forward to working with them to finish the job.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlelady from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN), a member of the committee.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. I want to thank Chairman OBERSTAR and Mr. MICA and Mr. DUNCAN and Chairwoman JOHNSON and Mr. PASCRELL for their hard work in bringing this bill to the floor; and I want to congratulate my good friend, EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, for bringing her first bill to the floor this week as chairwoman of the Water Resources Subcommittee.

I am so pleased that our committee, with the guidance of our transportation guru, Mr. OBERSTAR, will be making access to a safe wastewater infrastructure and a clean water supply a top priority.

There are places in my district and in the State of Florida where the sewer and water system are as bad as some

systems that I have seen in Third World countries. Let me repeat. There are places in my district that remind me of being in a Third World country when it comes to water and sewer, and this infrastructure is what separates us from those countries. This is why cleaning up these systems is so important and why this legislation is so necessary.

This bill provides \$1.8 billion over 5 years to municipalities and States to improve and prevent sewer overflow by improving the aging and obsolete sewer systems that plague many towns and cities. These improvements will not just protect the environment but will improve overall public health.

One of the greatest things about serving on the Transportation Committee is that our committee actually puts people to work in good-paying jobs that benefit the public. We all talk a lot on this floor about supporting hardworking Americans, but some people don't believe that those workers deserve fair wages for their hard work. This is why it is so important that we support Davis-Bacon and ensure that everyone who works hard can experience the American Dream.

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Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I now recognize the distinguished Chair of the entire committee, Mr. OBERSTAR, to close general debate.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Minnesota is recognized for 9½ minutes.

Mr. OBERSTAR. As far back as the 108th Congress, the committee considered and favorably reported this bill to address the urgent and mounting needs of comprehensive wastewater infrastructure. A visionary on the committee and leading the charge on this legislation was our former committee member, Mr. PASCRELL, the gentleman from New Jersey, who spoke earlier. He and Mr. CAPUANO, the gentleman from Massachusetts, urged upon the committee a vigorous program of reinvestment in the Nation's wastewater infrastructure needs. The committee, in fact, in the 108th Congress considered and favorably reported this bill with total bipartisan support.

Regrettably, it didn't reach the House floor in the 108th Congress. It wasn't reported from the committee in the 109th Congress. The needs have only grown. They have worsened. In those areas of the gulf stricken by the Katrina and Rita and Wilma hurricanes, the needs are crushing as the gentleman from Louisiana can well attest.

So we have moved again expeditiously in the committee to bring this bill to the House floor. I thank all those who have participated: the gentleman from New Jersey; the gentleman from Massachusetts; especially the Chair of our Subcommittee on

Water Resources, the gentlewoman from Texas; and the gentleman from Louisiana who is now managing the bill on the Republican side. These are serious, urgent problems, combined sewer overflows.

The administration in their statement of opinion on the bill sort of suggests that this is not a national problem. We settled that issue in 1956, that clean water is a national problem when my predecessor, John Blotnik, authored the very first legislation, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments 1956, signed into law by President Dwight Eisenhower. Every President since then has acknowledged the need for the Nation to address the problems of clean water in our rivers, the tributaries to those rivers, the lakes, the estuaries and the saltwater regions of coastlines of the United States and the Great Lakes.

The vast majority of cost in cleaning our Nation's wastewater falls on the shoulders of local communities, local ratepayers, with some participation from States varying from one State to the other, and now through the Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund.

We have felt that, as the committee that originated this legislation, that led the charge for the Nation to clean up the Nation's rivers, lakes and receiving waters of all types, to leave a heritage for those who come after us of clean water. This investment we make today, that will, I am very confident, quickly be considered by the other body, and I am quite confident will be signed into law by the President, will move us along the way toward that goal of meeting the Nation's need for clean water.

As is stated in the opening paragraph of the Clean Water Act of 1972, the purpose of the act is to establish and maintain the chemical, biological and physical integrity of the Nation's waters. With this legislation, we make a down payment on meeting that objective.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I rise to express my concerns about the bill that is before us, H.R. 569. At the beginning of the 110th Congress, the Democrat majority talked about the need for fiscal responsibility and with much fanfare passed the pay-go rules. Yet, for almost every bill that has been considered thus far this year they have waived the pay-go rules. They do so again today.

The bill they have brought to the House floor authorizes \$1.8 billion in increased federal spending over the next five years for state and local sewer programs. This \$1.8 billion price tag is more than a half-a-billion more than what the Republican majority put forward in the last Congress when it was seeking to reauthorize this program.

The bill under consideration today is anything but music to taxpayers' ears. Essentially, the Democrats are proposing a no-strings-attached taxpayer handout to states for local water sewer projects without responsible cost-sharing arrangements provided in currently existing programs.

Furthermore, Florida communities would receive very little, if any, assistance. The state

of Florida has already addressed many of the problems associated with mixed storm water and sewage systems and would thus receive very little benefit. So, this largely creates a new program for which Florida taxpayers will pay on others' behalf.

A more equitable and fiscally responsible approach is to not divert funding from the State Revolving Fund program as is proposed in this bill. The SRF already helps states and local communities fund various water improvement projects. However, it does so in a more equitable and fiscally responsible manner by providing low-cost loans and other cost-sharing arrangements that encourage states and local communities to take ownership of high priority projects.

Today's bill undermines this responsible approach and would incentivize states and local communities to become more dependent on federal subsidies for short- and long-term financing of their water sewer systems, rather than on the existing SRF. This bill simply hands money to the states, who then pass it on to local communities, without requiring them to have a detailed financing plan in place, and without cost sharing.

For these reasons I am not able to support H.R. 569.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Chairman, Congress has long recognized the need to protect our nation's water supply. Over three decades ago, we passed the Clean Water Act (CWA) establishing a federal program to aid wastewater treatment plant construction and upgrades. And, in the years since, over \$76.5 billion has been provided to assist cities in building and upgrading sewage infrastructure.

Ask any mayor or council member in your district, and I am certain that they will agree this money has been well-spent helping communities to prevent the discharge of waste into surface waters. Unfortunately, while funding needs have increased over the years (21% between 1996 and 2000), Congress has yet to increase its appropriations to meet this growing demand. In the end, our cities and towns have been left to cover many of these costs alone.

In my district, the city of Fall River has been undertaking significant wastewater upgrades, costing in excess of \$100 million. Within the community, there is strong support for complying with the Clean Water Act, and the city itself has devoted a significant amount of public funds to support this effort. But, the reality is that without federal assistance, they would be unable to meet the standards mandated by the CWA.

The towns of Westborough and Shrewsbury share a treatment plant and are facing similar challenges with costly upgrades. And in my hometown, the Upper Blackstone Water Pollution Abatement District servicing the City of Worcester and surrounding communities has found itself in a nearly identical position.

Similarly, the city of Marlborough operates two wastewater treatment plants; one on the easterly side of the City discharges into the Hop Brook River and the second on the westerly side of the City discharges into the Assabet River. Under the conditions of the City's NPDES permits, they are required to make substantial upgrades to both of their treatment plants. The City of Marlborough's engineering consultant estimates these upgrades to cost between \$60 and \$80 million depending on whether the City is required to

recharge into the groundwater as opposed as directly into the river.

Over the years, I have worked to obtain some modest direct federal financial relief for these projects, but it has been clear that the needs of these two cities have far exceeded the funding available. In fact, under the Republican-led Congress, funding for the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund, which addresses critical water infrastructure needs, was slashed by 34 percent. And, though sewer overflow grants were authorized for 2002 and 2003, the Republican leadership refused to appropriate any funds and let the authorization expire.

In the end, this failure to increase federal funding for these programs is what makes the Clean Water Act an unfunded mandate in the eyes of the cities and towns we are all elected to represent.

And that is why this legislation we have before us today, H.R. 569, is so important. It authorizes \$1.5 billion in grants to local communities over the next five years to prevent dangerous sewer overflow. Such funding will be invaluable to communities like Fall River and Marlborough, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 569.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 569, the Water Quality Investment Act.

This bipartisan bill authorizes \$1.8 billion dollars over the next five years for grants to prevent dangerous sewer failures—which can create significant public health hazards in communities across Upstate New York.

This bill is critically important in helping districts such as mine—as our rural communities are invariably faced with aging sewer systems.

Upstate New York is on the verge of a great economic revival, but in order to take that next step, we must address our major water concerns. To attract and keep businesses in our towns we need the infrastructure to support them.

This legislation has the potential to help benefit over 10 communities in my Upstate New York District. From Whitehall to Mechanicville, to Hudson—today we are making an important investment in our future.

I am pleased to see this Congress recognizes the need to update our water systems and hope to see a continued emphasis on infrastructure investments that will benefit rural communities like those I represent in New York.

The Water Quality Investment Act doesn't only make sense from an economic standpoint—but it is vitally important from an environmental standpoint as well.

Water systems in my district serve some of the nation's most pristine waters including Lake George in the Adirondack Mountains. Towns like Ticonderoga need this help to preserve our environmental treasures.

I thank you again Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to speak in support of this crucial bill, and I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this vital funding that will protect lives, preserve the environment, and help cities and states pay for modernizing their sewer infrastructure.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 569, the Water Quality Investment Act. This legislation is extremely important to our local communities to improve stormwater and sewer system infrastructure.

In my congressional district alone, I have numerous communities, including the city of

Sparta, the village of Coulterville, New Baden, Nameoki, and Ewing Township, that all need storm water and sewer system infrastructure improvements. However, the local communities have no money to make those improvements. We must provide a better standard of environmental health to our communities so that public health and our natural resources are not compromised.

H.R. 569 seeks to help by providing \$1.8 billion over a 5-year period for sewer overflow control grants provided by the EPA. These grants would be used by communities to plan, design and construct treatment works to address combined sewer overflows and sanitary sewer overflows.

Mr. Chairman, we must help our State and local governments meet Federal standards and provide them with much needed relief. If it is a priority to build sewer and wastewater infrastructure in Iraq, it should be a priority here at home.

Again I strongly support H.R. 569 and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support H.R. 569, the "Water Quality Investment Act," which authorizes \$1.8 billion in much needed funds for municipalities to control combined sewer overflows, CSOs, and sanitary sewer overflows, SSOs, at the local level, and to better reduce sewer overflows, which will allow them to maximize environmental and health benefits. This necessary increase in funding is a good first step toward addressing the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's estimated sewer overflow control costs of over \$150 billion nationally.

Mr. Chairman, sewer system overflows are a growing problem in the United States today. Most Americans do not know that many of our municipalities utilize sewer systems constructed as far back as the 1860s. This antiquated infrastructure is deteriorating, and as a result, State and local governments are often unable to stop sewage and untreated waste from flowing into streets, basements, rivers, and lakes. It goes without saying, Mr. Chairman, that sewer overflows represent a major public health hazard.

Combined sewer systems, those handling both waste water and storm water, which are found mainly in older cities, are one source of these overflows. Our most recent data indicates that a total of 772 municipalities have combined sewers, serving approximately 40 million people. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, these combined sewer overflows, CSOs, discharge about 850 billion gallons of wastewater and storm water containing untreated waste, toxic debris, and other pollutants.

Sanitary sewer systems often overflow as well, releasing untreated waste into our environment in all 50 States and the District of Columbia. For example, in 2003, New Jersey closed over 30,000 acres of classified shellfish growing areas due to a large sanitary sewer overflow, SSO. Another year saw over 1,000 sewer overflows in Michigan, totaling over 20 billion gallons in spilled sewage.

Upgrading these systems is extremely expensive. The EPA estimates that the total cost of repairing the country's combined sewer systems is nearly \$51 billion. The price tag for fixing U.S. sanitary sewer systems hovers around \$89 billion. Sewer overflow control grants were authorized for 2002 and 2003, but

the Republican-controlled Congress never appropriated any funds and let the authorization expire.

But the new majority in this House understands that ensuring clean water is a top priority for America's working families. A clean and healthy environment begins with clean water. H.R. 569 will help to make the Nation's water supply cleaner and healthier by authorizing \$1.8 billion in much needed funding for municipalities to control combined sewer overflows, CSOs, and sanitary sewer overflows. That is why H.R. 569 is strongly endorsed by dozens of water management, environmental, public resource, building trades, and civil engineering associations, including the following:

American Concrete Pipe Association; American Concrete Pressure Pipe Association; American Council of Engineering Companies; AFSME; American Public Works Association; American Society of Civil Engineers; American Sportfishing Association; Associated General Contractors of America; Associated Equipment Distributors; Association of Equipment Manufacturers; and Association of California Water Agencies.

American Supply Association; Construction Management Association of America; California Rebuild America Coalition; Chesapeake Bay Foundation; Clean Water Action; Clean Water Construction Coalition; Design-Build Institute of America; Environmental and Energy Study Institute; Food & Water Watch; Laborers' International Union of North America; and International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers.

International Union of Operating Engineers, AFL-CIO; National Association of Counties; National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies; National Association of Clean Water Agencies; National Association of Regional Councils; National Association of Sewer Service Companies; National Association of Towns and Townships; National Construction Alliance; National League of Cities; National Precast Concrete Association; and National Ready Mixed Concrete Association.

National Rural Water Association; National Society of Professional Engineers; National Urban Agriculture Council; Pipe Rehabilitation Council; Portland Cement Association; Rural Community Assistance Partnership; SAVE International; Underground Contractors Association of Illinois; Uni-Bell PVC Pipe Association; United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices in the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry, AFL-CIO; The Vinyl Institute; The Western Coalition of Arid States; and United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly support H.R. 569 and urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation that addresses one of the real and pressing needs of the American people.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Chairman, I regret that I could not be present today because of a family medical matter and I would like to submit this statement for the record in support of H.R. 569, the Water Quality Investment Act.

The overflow of sewage into streets, basements, rivers and lakes is a serious environmental and health problem. Communities across New England face a higher risk of sewer overflows because of their aged and deteriorating infrastructure. For example, in my home State of Connecticut, the City of Hartford's sewer system was built 150 years ago.

It was designed to support roughly 15,000 people, but today the expanded system, including the district's central Hartford Treatment Plant, serves 400,000 people in 6 towns. As a result, over 1 billion gallons of untreated sewage overflows every year in Greater Hartford. On average, combined sewer overflows occur more than 50 times a year, which impacts 30 miles of the Connecticut River, including area basements and streets.

In Connecticut's First District, which I represent, the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) is responsible for providing water supply, water treatment and water pollution control to eight cities and towns, including Hartford, West Hartford, East Hartford, Newington, Wethersfield, Rocky Hill, Windsor and Bloomfield. In order to support the rehabilitation and the rebuilding of Hartford's core system, in addition to satisfying State and Federal consent orders to eliminate sanitary sewer overflows, the MDC must expend more than \$1 billion. On November 7, 2006, the voters in the eight MDC municipalities approved an \$800 million bond referendum for addressing the sewer overflow problem. However, without much needed Federal support, the annual cost to homeowners will increase from \$119 per year to more than \$1,000 per year. In Hartford, the city's residents have an average income less than the region's average and as a result of these regressive wastewater fees, will experience an even greater economic burden.

It is because of outdated wastewater systems, clean water needs and the direct impact it has on communities like those in Connecticut that the legislation before the House today is so important. The Water Quality Investment Act would reauthorize Sewer Overflow Control Grants for \$1.8 billion over the next 5 years. These grants were authorized in Fiscal Year 2002 and Fiscal Year 2003, however, no funds were ever appropriated and the authorization of this program was allowed to expire.

Today and later this week when the House considers the Healthy Communities Water Supply Act (H.R. 700) and the Water Quality Financing Act (H.R. 720), the Democratic Majority is sending a clear message to the American people—this Congress is committed to investing in the health and safety of your family and your community. I urge all of my colleagues in supporting the underlying bill.

The CHAIRMAN. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in the bill shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the 5-minute rule and shall be considered read.

The text of the amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

H.R. 569

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Water Quality Investment Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. SEWER OVERFLOW CONTROL GRANTS.

(a) ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS.—Section 221(e) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1301(e)) is amended to read as follows:

“(e) ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS.—A project that receives assistance under this section shall be carried out subject to the same re-

quirements as a project that receives assistance from a State water pollution control revolving fund under title VI, except to the extent that the Governor of the State in which the project is located determines that a requirement of title VI is inconsistent with the purposes of this section.”.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—The first sentence of section 221(f) of such Act (33 U.S.C. 1301(f)) is amended by striking “\$750,000,000” and all that follows before the period and inserting “\$250,000,000 for fiscal year 2008, \$300,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, \$350,000,000 for fiscal year 2010, \$400,000,000 for fiscal year 2011, and \$500,000,000 for fiscal year 2012”.

(c) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—Section 221(g) of such Act (33 U.S.C. 1301(g)) is amended to read as follows:

“(g) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—

“(1) FISCAL YEAR 2008.—Subject to subsection (h), the Administrator shall use the amounts appropriated to carry out this section for fiscal year 2008 for making grants to municipalities and municipal entities under subsection (a)(2) in accordance with the criteria set forth in subsection (b).

“(2) FISCAL YEAR 2009 AND THEREAFTER.—Subject to subsection (h), the Administrator shall use the amounts appropriated to carry out this section for fiscal year 2009 and each fiscal year thereafter for making grants to States under subsection (a)(1) in accordance with a formula to be established by the Administrator, after providing notice and an opportunity for public comment, that allocates to each State a proportional share of such amounts based on the total needs of the State for municipal combined sewer overflow controls and sanitary sewer overflow controls identified in the most recent survey conducted pursuant to section 516.”.

(d) REPORTS.—The first sentence of section 221(i) of such Act (33 U.S.C. 1301(i)) is amended by striking “2003” and inserting “2010”.

The CHAIRMAN. No amendment to that amendment shall be in order except those printed in the designated place in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and pro forma amendments for the purpose of debate. Amendments printed in the RECORD may be offered only by the Member who caused it to be printed or his designee and shall be considered read.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. KING OF IOWA

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment that is filed and should be in order at the desk.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 3 offered by Mr. KING of Iowa:

Page 4, line 6, strike “\$250,000,000” and insert “\$237,500,000”.

Page 4, line 7, strike “\$300,000,000” and insert “\$285,000,000”.

Page 4, line 7, strike “\$350,000,000” and insert “\$332,500,000”.

Page 4, line 8, strike “\$400,000,000” and insert “\$380,000,000”.

Page 4, line 9, strike “\$500,000,000” and insert “\$475,000,000”.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Chairman, my amendment is a simple amendment. What it does is it recognizes that this authorization was authorized by Congress in 2002. It was authorized for \$1.5 billion. This authorization takes us on up well over that. What I have done with my amendment is I do a 5-percent

reduction in the authorization by the individual line items, and they all are on page four, so it amounts to a 5-percent reduction and takes us down to a number just a little bit above the inflation-adjusted 2002 number. So the \$1.5 billion that was 2002 after adjusted for inflation comes to \$1.69 billion. My amendment takes it up to just about \$1.7 billion. This overall is not in the President's budget and we don't have this in any other budget, in Republicans or Democrats here, so this is an extra authorization.

Federal spending in the 110th Congress is out of control. The first five bills of the 110th Congress wasted about \$14 billion of taxpayer money. If American taxpayers are going to be forced to foot the bill for projects that cities and States should be paying for, then they should only have to be forced to pay a reasonable amount. And if Members cannot vote for a reasonable reduction as done by this amendment, it proves that the majority in this Congress carries with it a tax-and-spend attitude. The restraint is what is in my amendment.

The funding authorized under this bill is \$1.8 billion. My amendment will bring spending in line to about the inflation-adjusted portion, as I mentioned earlier. We need to make sure that our adjustments do so without wasteful government spending. We should not sit back and allow the majority to force their expansive jumbo jets or their poorly masked, earmark-ridden continuing resolutions on the American taxpayers.

Mr. Chairman, we all have to learn to tighten our belts. We have to learn how to do more with less. We have to draw the line somewhere. And we actually should draw it everywhere where we can to squeeze this down. The checks that this Congress have already written in a closed and rigid process are simply too large. In last year's elections, the new majority party promised the American people that they would rein in Federal spending and return fiscal restraint to Washington, DC. So far, that has not been what I have seen here in this Congress. I offer this opportunity to the minority and the majority to bring us back to a level of fiscal restraint.

We can and must do something about the deficit. We must do it right now. We have our opportunity right here. By voting for this amendment, you are stating that American taxpayers should not have to pay higher taxes in the future because we couldn't control our spending today. I think it is clear. This is a carefully drafted and a reasonable spending restraint amendment. It is a 5-percent reduction and it takes us down to an inflation-adjusted number from the 2002 authorization. I haven't heard a lot of discussion here about the expansion in needs. I did hear some significant requests that I think are relatively legitimate.

□ 1340

But it is important for us to be responsible in our request. It is important that we tighten our belt a little bit. If we can take it up one notch here, we can take it up another notch on another authorization and another appropriation. Perhaps we can get through this process. Having met PAYGO, for example, maybe we can get through this process and actually have a budget that is closer to balance than some we have seen in the past. Maybe we can get to the point of the promises that were made that we are going to have a balanced budget this year. I am looking forward to seeing that. I am trying to be helpful in offering this amendment, and I would ask my colleagues to support this fiscal restraint, fiscally responsible, reasonable amendment that preserves the authorization of 2002, makes adjustments for inflation so real dollars will buy the same amount of projects that would have been brought subsequent to the 2002 authorization, which, of course, was not appropriated to.

Mr. Chairman, I urge passage of this amendment.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

The gentleman from Iowa has made a very thoughtful presentation and offers an amendment that is founded on some logic of the previous history of the legislation, and suggests that we proceed at what he considers a Consumer Price Index rate of increase over the previous legislation, 2002 bill. If the gentleman is prepared to accept success, we will accept his amendment.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I appreciate the gentleman's remarks, and I am very much in agreement with you that this is a responsible thing for us to do. And I again thank you, and I would be very happy to accept the recommendation and your support, and I would be willing to do the same.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Chairman, we are prepared to accept the gentleman's amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. PRICE OF GEORGIA

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 1 offered by Mr. PRICE of Georgia:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

SEC. 3. REQUIREMENT OF OFFSETS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—No authorization of appropriations made by this Act or other provision of this Act that results in costs to the Federal Government shall be effective except to the extent that this Act provides for offsetting decreases in spending of the Federal Government, such that the net effect of this

Act does not either increase the Federal deficit or reduce the Federal surplus.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms "deficit" and "surplus" have the meanings given such terms in the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 et seq.).

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, as you know, this bill, the Water Quality Investment Act of 2007, would reauthorize an expired Federal program that provides grants to States for the purpose of providing money to a municipality or municipalities for planning, designing and construction of treatment works for combined sewer overflows and sanitary sewer overflows.

This bill authorizes, at least did prior to the last amendment, \$1.8 billion in Federal grants. And while this bill is important, equally important is that my amendment will apply the principle of pay-as-you-go, something that we have heard a lot talked about here by the new majority.

Any new spending authorized in this bill would be required to be offset by a specific amount to make it so that there would be no increase in Federal spending.

Simply, the amendment provides that no authorization of appropriations made by this act that results in costs to the Federal Government shall be effective, except to the extent that the act provides for equal decreases in spending somewhere else in the Federal Government.

An excerpt from the "New Direction for America," which was proposed by the now majority party last year when they were running for the majority, said, "Our new direction is committed to pay-as-you-go budgeting. No more deficit spending. We are committed to auditing the books and subjecting every facet of Federal spending to tough budget discipline and accountability, forcing the Congress to choose a new direction and the right priorities for all Americans."

Mr. Chairman, that sounds great, and I agree with that. My concern is what we may have here is another example of Orwellian democracy where just because you say something means it is so. But, Mr. Chairman, rules aren't rules if you only follow them when you want to.

So this is a matter of principle. It is a matter of accountability. My amendment is very simple and would provide that no additional spending would be undertaken unless it were offset elsewhere.

I would urge my colleagues to adopt this sensible PAYGO amendment to this Water Quality Investment Act of 2007.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I read with interest and puzzlement the gentleman's amendment that requires offsetting decreases in spending of the Federal Government, such that the net effect of this act does not either increase the

Federal deficit nor reduce Federal surplus, of which we do not have one at this point.

We have inquired of the Congressional Budget Office about the language of the bill. The legislation before us, H.R. 569, does not include direct spending. The Congressional Budget Office estimates in their statement included in the committee report language: CBO estimates that implementing this legislation would cost about \$1.45 billion over the next 5 years, which should be less now with the King amendment, and an additional \$0.35 billion after 2012, assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts. Enacting the bill, CBO says, would not affect direct spending or receipts.

So I think the gentleman's amendment, while well intentioned, goes beyond the purpose of PAYGO. It would apply if we were taking money out of the highway trust fund. This is direct spending, although the highway trust fund is a different matter because there is already an antideficiency provision, you cannot spend more than the highway trust fund has in its account; and it is managed in a different manner.

So, we do not have direct spending authority in the legislation. And, therefore, the gentleman's amendment is not applicable, is not valid, and I would oppose the amendment.

I yield to the gentleman if he would like to respond.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for yielding. And given that I may disagree with that, but I would ask then, as a matter of principle, would you then not agree that adopting this amendment simply puts on record that we as a Congress believe that any money that would result as a result of this bill should be offset?

Mr. OBERSTAR. Reclaiming my time, adopting the amendment would create a false impression that we in fact have created a direct spending authority in the legislation. And the gentleman is perfectly within his rights to offer such an amendment on direct spending legislation, for which I would have no objection, but in this legislation, it creates the false impression that we are in fact creating direct spending authority when in fact we are not. And, if adopted, it would create an unacceptable and invalid precedent.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. OBERSTAR. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I appreciate that perspective. We worked with legislative counsel on this, as well as the Parliamentarian, and believe this is an appropriately crafted amendment. And I understand and appreciate the gentleman's reservation.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Chairman, I respectfully oppose the amendment. I would appreciate it if the gentleman would withdraw the amendment and not have a recorded vote on it, but he is certainly within his rights to proceed further on it.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to this amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE).

The amendment confuses the issue of authorization of appropriations and actual funding of these programs through the appropriations process. This amendment would require that any authorization of appropriations be considered with the corresponding offset, regardless of whether the program ever receives any funding.

In the example of the sewer overflows grant program, we are considering today a program that I remind my colleagues has never been funded through the appropriations process. This amendment would require the identification of \$1.45 billion over the next 5 years in offsets regardless of whether appropriations are ever enacted in this program.

□ 1350

During the first few days of the legislative session, the new Democratic majority renewed PAYGO rules to require the identification of offsets of any changes in mandatory spending by legislative initiatives. This important provision expired under the Republican control of the House with no attempt to restore these protections to the Federal budgetary process.

As the gentleman is well aware, in the first days of the 110th Congress, the Democratic majority reinstituted PAYGO rules that requires the offsets in Federal receipts resulting from legislative proposals.

This bill has no effect on direct spending. In its analysis of the bill, the Congressional Budget Office specifically stated enacting the bill would not affect direct spending or receipts. However, to require offsets for any authorization of appropriations, regardless of its impact on Federal receipts, is beyond the scope of PAYGO and an appropriate limitation of the ability of Congress to address the needs of the Nation.

I oppose this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, I would ask the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE), respectfully, to withdraw this amendment. And if I may just take a few moments.

The pay-as-you-go rule, which was adopted by the House of Representatives, presents consideration of bills that affect direct or mandatory spending as we know it, or revenues, unless the measures also contain offsets, as I am sure my friend from Georgia knows.

Direct spending includes funds for entitlement programs, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Federal Employee Retirement and Unemployment Compensation and other programs that you and I, I think, would consider man-

datory. All other spending in the budget is referred to as the discretionary spending, which is provided in and controlled by the annual appropriations process and is not subject to PAYGO. That is why the Congressional Budget Office has stated that this legislation does not trigger the PAYGO rule. CBO says, this is not direct spending, so it is not applicable in this legislation.

Now, I think your point is that maybe we ought to put everything under the same umbrella, but then you are going to have to change every authorizing program in the Congress.

This is a reauthorization. We are authorizing a program that already exists. The original authorization was signed into law in fiscal year 2001 in the omnibus appropriations bill. We are going to offset each and every reauthorization we consider in the House? I don't know if that is the direction you want to go in.

This majority, the Democratic majority, and we are talking about a bipartisan bill here, voted out unanimously in conference, this majority has instituted strong PAYGO rules, pay as you go. We are taking fiscal responsibility very seriously.

Nonetheless, neither this bill nor any other reauthorization bill falls under House PAYGO rules; and I wanted to make that clear.

The fact is that this is too critical a program, and I don't sense the sense of urgency here. This is too sensitive an issue, too urgent an issue to jeopardize with attempts to score a political point, as the gentleman from Georgia is attempting to do, I believe, if he considers to move forward. Failing to prevent sewer overflows will result in more sewage, more toxins, more debris making the way into our waterways and drinking water.

We have worked on both sides of the aisle for so many years to clean this mess up. What legacy do we leave to our children if we don't do this?

It is our duty to prevent beach closures, shellfish bed closures, contamination of drinking water and other environmental and public health concerns that result from sewer overflows before it is too late.

I would ask my friend from Georgia if he would consider not asking for a vote on this amendment.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PASCRELL. I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. OBERSTAR. May I make another attempt with my colleague?

If I may make another appeal to the gentleman from Georgia. In the bill that we will consider on Friday to replenish State revolving loan funds, we submitted the legislation to the Office of Management and Budget and to the Congressional Budget Office. Both came back and said there is a possibility, not the possibility, there is the reality that local governments will float municipal bonds to match and to repay the cost of the loan from the

State revolving loan fund. Those municipal bonds will result in a reduction in Federal revenues. Therefore, you must create an offset.

We then, taking that direction from CBO, reevaluated the bill in a bipartisan fashion. We reduced its authorization number from \$20 billion to \$14 billion, the period of time from 5 to 4 years, created the offset for the \$14 billion.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL) has expired.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent for 2 additional minutes.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the right to object.

The CHAIRMAN. Objection is heard.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to withdraw my reservation should the same courtesy be extended to me to have an opportunity to address the issues that have been raised.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Chairman, I asked unanimous consent that the gentleman may be given two additional minutes so that I might yield to the gentleman from Georgia for him to respond.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request?

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I withdraw my reservation.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Having made that presentation, if I may yield to the gentleman from Georgia for his response.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Well, I appreciate the gentleman yielding, and I appreciate the passion that this has resulted in on the other side.

I want to make it very clear, this is an important bill. There is no doubt about it. I have municipalities, cities that are certainly in need of assistance. But it is also important that we make certain that we prioritize here in Washington how we spend hard-earned taxpayer money. And if we are not going to start on that road now, when are we going to start?

We have heard a lot about fiscal responsibility from your side of the aisle. We heard a lot last year. We have heard a lot of promises. But what, in fact, has happened is that so much of the spending that we do here in Washington doesn't come under this umbrella of PAYGO that has been adopted by the House.

In fact, I would venture to say that the press releases that were released by my good friends when they adopted PAYGO didn't have any fine print in it that said, oh, by the way, it doesn't apply to discretionary spending. So PAYGO isn't PAYGO unless it is PAYGO for everybody; come one, come all.

So I would respectfully suggest that my good friends ought to, in the spirit of true fiscal responsibility, ought to support this amendment, and we can

move forward arm in arm and make certain that we are spending the hard-earned taxpayers' money of America wisely.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCARELL) has expired.

(On request of Mr. PASCARELL, and by unanimous consent, Mr. OBERSTAR was allowed to proceed for 1 additional minute.)

Mr. OBERSTAR. I explained the situation with H.R. 720, the State Revolving Loan Fund, Mr. Chairman, so that the gentleman from Georgia would have understanding and confidence that the committee has done its homework, has acted responsibly on the matter of offsets where there is direct spending or where there is a reduction in Federal revenues.

□ 1400

We submitted H.R. 720 to review by CBO and the Office of Management and Budget. Both were of the opinion that there would be a reduction in revenues if municipalities issue municipal bonds and that those municipal bonds will be tax exempt and therefore a reduction in revenues.

The distinction between that legislation and this is that there is no direct spending involved. There is no resulting responsibility on governments to take action that would result in a reduction in revenues, nor is this an appropriation. It is not a direct spending. And, therefore, it is not subject to the PAYGO rules.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE).

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR.
ROHRABACHER

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 2 offered by Mr. ROHRABACHER:

Page 5, after line 9, add the following:

(e) PARTICIPATION IN EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION PILOT PROGRAM.—Section 221 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1300) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(j) PARTICIPATION IN EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION PILOT PROGRAM.—The Administrator may make a grant to a State, municipality, or municipal entity under subsection (a) only if the State, municipality, or municipal entity provides assurances satisfactory to the Administrator that the State, municipality, or municipal entity will impose conditions requiring all persons, including contractors and subcontractors, carrying out activities using amounts of the grant—

“(1) to elect to participate in the basic pilot program described in section 403(a) of

the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1324a note); and

“(2) to comply with the terms and conditions of the election.”.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I reserve a point of order on the amendment.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Chairman, my amendment would, very simply, prohibit government contracts in various water projects in terms of the Water Quality Investment Act from being provided to contractors who are hiring illegal immigrants. Among the many infrastructure treasures this Nation must guard, of course, is our water supply. And we want to ensure, if we are going to expend billions of dollars, taxpayer dollars, in improvements, that everyone the Federal Government is responsible for paying to work on these projects has a right to work here.

My amendment simply says that any recipient of a government grant or contract under this bill must use Social Security's basic pilot verification system to ensure that all employees are in this country legally.

The basic pilot program was expanded in 2003 and now covers 50 States. Many private employers who wish to be good corporate citizens already use the program.

This program is offered to every employer at no cost. When it comes to something as critical as our Nation's health and our water supply, this Congress has no excuse not to ensure that taxpayer dollars and government-funded jobs go to those who are in this country legally and who are legally entitled to get those jobs. The American people expect and deserve to have the Federal Government set an example for private industry when dealing with a system so essential to the health and well-being of our people.

Let us note that there is a lot of talk about prevailing wage going on in Congress as if we have to ensure that there is a higher wage given to people who work on government projects. Well, the very easiest way to do that is to ensure that contractors who work on government programs are not hiring illegal immigrants.

What we have here is a situation where a large number of people in this body are unwilling to confront the illegal immigration challenge at the expense of whom? The American working people whose jobs are being bid down in terms of the wages and the American taxpayers, who are, in this case, if we don't confront that problem, are going to basically have to pay higher taxes in order to pay for the same project. So, thus, we have the American working people and the American taxpayer both being hurt by not forcing employers to ensure that they are hiring legal workers for these various programs.

Now, I know the American people would agree with me, and I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, which is pro-working man and pro-taxpayer.

POINT OF ORDER

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I raise a point of order against this amendment. The amendment imposes conditions for receipt of these funds that are unrelated to the underlying bill. Specifically, the amendment requires contractors to participate in the employment eligibility verification pilot program of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. The amendment is not germane to H.R. 569 and violates clause 7 of rule XVI of the Rules of the House.

The CHAIRMAN. Does any Member wish to be heard on the point of order?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Chairman, I believe my amendment is germane. After all, we do add many such regulations on bills that we pass. They have to meet certain standards. This standard certainly is no different than many of the other standards.

It is just that this body refuses ever to involve themselves in anything that would stem the flow of illegal immigrants into this country and quit giving people an incentive to come here to take the jobs and the benefits that belong to the American people. And certainly this amendment, which is no different than many other types of restrictions that we place on government spending, is certainly germane to this bill. And, therefore, I would argue my case that it is germane.

The CHAIRMAN. Does anyone else wish to be heard on the point of order?

The gentlewoman from Texas makes a point of order that the amendment offered by the gentleman from California is not germane.

H.R. 569 authorizes the Environmental Protection Agency to make grants for sewer overflow control projects.

The amendment would impose a condition on the making of such grants. It would require the recipients of the funds to certify that all entities carrying out the sewer overflow control projects had elected to participate in an employment eligibility verification program under the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.

Clause 7 of rule XVI, the germaneness rule, provides that no proposition on a subject different from that under consideration shall be admitted under color of amendment.

As recorded in Deschler-Brown Precedents, volume 11, chapter 28, section 30.23, an amendment conditioning the availability to certain recipients of funds in an authorization bill upon their compliance with laws not otherwise applicable to those recipients and within the jurisdiction of other House committees may be ruled out as not germane.

As the Chair understands it, participation in the employment eligibility verification program is voluntary on the part of employers. The amendment would require such participation by recipients of the funds authorized by the

bill. As such, the amendment requires the recipients to comply with a law not otherwise applicable and within the jurisdiction of other House committees.

The amendment is not germane. The point of order is sustained. The amendment is not in order.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PASCRELL) having assumed the chair, Mr. SCHIFF, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 569) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to authorize appropriations for sewer overflow control grants, had come to no resolution thereon.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 569.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 9 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1606

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. KIND) at 4 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.

WATER QUALITY INVESTMENT ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 214 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 569.

□ 1607

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 569) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to authorize appropriations for sewer overflow control grants, with Mr. HASTINGS of Florida (Acting Chairman) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, amendment No. 2 printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHR-ABACHER) had been disposed of.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. PRICE OF GEORGIA

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, the pending business is the demand for a recorded vote on amendment No. 1 offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIRMAN. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 166, noes 260, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 123]

AYES—166

Aderholt	Gillmor	Nunes
Akin	Gingrey	Paul
Bachmann	Gohmert	Pearce
Bachus	Goode	Pence
Barrett (SC)	Goodlatte	Peterson (PA)
Bartlett (MD)	Granger	Petri
Barton (TX)	Graves	Pickering
Bilbray	Hall (TX)	Pitts
Bilirakis	Hastert	Platts
Bishop (UT)	Hastings (WA)	Poe
Blackburn	Hayes	Porter
Boehner	Heller	Price (GA)
Bonner	Hensarling	Przye (OH)
Boozman	Herger	Putnam
Boustany	Hoekstra	Radanovich
Brady (TX)	Hulshof	Ramstad
Brown (SC)	Hunter	Reichert
Brown-Waite,	Inglis (SC)	Renzi
Ginny	Issa	Reynolds
Buchanan	Jindal	Rogers (AL)
Burgess	Johnson (IL)	Rogers (MI)
Burton (IN)	Johnson, Sam	Rohrabacher
Buyer	Jones (NC)	Ros-Lehtinen
Campbell (CA)	Jordan	Roskam
Cannon	Keller	Royce
Cantor	King (IA)	Ryan (WI)
Capito	King (NY)	Sali
Castle	Kingston	Saxton
Chabot	Kirk	Schmidt
Coble	Kline (MN)	Sensenbrenner
Cole (OK)	Kuhl (NY)	Sessions
Conaway	LaHood	Shadegg
Crenshaw	Lamborn	Shimkus
Culberson	Lewis (KY)	Shuster
Davis (KY)	Lucas	Smith (NE)
Davis, David	LoBiondo	Smith (NJ)
Davis, Tom	Lucas	Smith (TX)
Deal (GA)	Lungren, Daniel	Souder
Dent	E.	Stearns
Diaz-Balart, L.	Mack	Sullivan
Diaz-Balart, M.	Marchant	Tancredo
Drake	Matheson	Terry
Dreier	McCarthy (CA)	Thornberry
Duncan	McCaul (TX)	Tiberi
Fallin	McCotter	Upton
Feeney	McCrery	Walberg
Ferguson	McHenry	Walden (OR)
Flake	McHugh	Walsh (NY)
Forbes	McKeon	Wamp
Fortenberry	McMorris	Weldon (FL)
Fortuño	Rodgers	Weller
Fossella	Miller (FL)	Westmoreland
Fox	Miller, Gary	Whitfield
Franks (AZ)	Moran (KS)	Wicker
Gallegly	Musgrave	Wilson (SC)
Garrett (NJ)	Myrick	
Gerlach	Neugebauer	

NOES—260

Ackerman	Allen	Andrews
Alexander	Altmire	Arcuri

Baca	Harman	Oberstar
Baird	Hastings (FL)	Oberstar
Baker	Hereth	Oliver
Baldwin	Higgins	Ortiz
Barrow	Hill	Pallone
Bean	Hinchey	Pascarella
Becerra	Hinojosa	Pastor
Berkley	Hirono	Pelosi
Berman	Hobson	Perlmutter
Berry	Hodes	Peterson (MN)
Biggert	Holden	Pomeroy
Bishop (GA)	Holt	Price (NC)
Bishop (NY)	Honda	Rahall
Blumenauer	Hooley	Rangel
Bordallo	Hoyer	Regula
Boren	Inslee	Rehberg
Boswell	Israel	Reyes
Boucher	Jackson (IL)	Rodriguez
Boyd (FL)	Jackson-Lee	Rogers (KY)
Brady (PA)	(TX)	Ross
Braley (IA)	Jefferson	Rothman
Brown, Corrine	Johnson (GA)	Roybal-Allard
Butterfield	Johnson, E. B.	Ruppersberger
Calvert	Jones (OH)	Rush
Capps	Kagen	Ryan (OH)
Capuano	Kanjorski	Salazar
Cardoza	Kaptur	Sánchez, Linda
Carnahan	Kennedy	T.
Carney	Kildee	Sanchez, Loretta
Carson	Kilpatrick	Sarbanes
Carter	Kind	Schakowsky
Castor	Klein (FL)	Schiff
Chandler	Knollenberg	Schwartz
Clarke	Kucinich	Scott (GA)
Clay	Lampson	Scott (VA)
Cleaver	Langevin	Serrano
Clyburn	Lantos	Sestak
Cohen	Larsen (WA)	Shays
Conyers	Latham	Shea-Porter
Cooper	LaTourette	Sherman
Costa	Lee	Shuler
Costello	Levin	Simpson
Courtney	Lewis (CA)	Sires
Cramer	Lewis (GA)	Skelton
Crowley	Lipinski	Slaughter
Cuellar	Loebach	Smith (WA)
Cummings	Lofgren, Zoe	Snyder
Davis (AL)	Lowe	Solis
Davis (CA)	Lynch	Space
Davis (IL)	Mahoney (FL)	Spratt
Davis, Lincoln	Maloney (NY)	Stark
DeFazio	Manzullo	Stupak
DeGette	Markey	Sutton
Delahunt	Marshall	Tanner
Dicks	Matsui	Tauscher
Dingell	McCarthy (NY)	Taylor
Doggett	McCollum (MN)	Thompson (CA)
Donnelly	McDermott	Thompson (MS)
Doolittle	McGovern	Tiahrt
Doyle	McIntyre	Tierney
Edwards	McNerney	Towns
Ehlers	McNulty	Turner
Ellison	Meehan	Udall (CO)
Ellsworth	Meek (FL)	Udall (NM)
Emanuel	Meeks (NY)	Van Hollen
Emerson	Melancon	Velázquez
Engel	Mica	Vislosky
English (PA)	Michaud	Walz (MN)
Eshoo	Millender	Wasserman
Etheridge	McDonald	Schultz
Everett	Miller (MI)	Waters
Farr	Miller (NC)	Watson
Filner	Miller, George	Watt
Frank (MA)	Mitchell	Waxman
Frelinghuysen	Mollohan	Weiner
Giffords	Moore (KS)	Welch (VT)
Gilchrest	Moore (WI)	Wexler
Gillibrand	Moran (VA)	Wilson (NM)
Gonzalez	Murphy (CT)	Wilson (OH)
Gordon	Murphy, Patrick	Wolf
Green, Al	Murphy, Tim	Woolsey
Green, Gene	Murtha	Wu
Grijalva	Nadler	Wynn
Gutierrez	Napolitano	Yarmuth
Hall (NY)	Neal (MA)	Young (AK)
Hare	Norton	Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—13

Abercrombie	Christensen	Fattah
Blunt	Cubin	Larson (CT)
Bono	Davis, Jo Ann	Payne
Boyd (KS)	DeLauro	
Camp (MI)	Faleomavaega	

□ 1635

Messrs. DINGELL, CALVERT, AL GREEN of Texas, MCNERNEY, SIMPSON, KNOLLENBERG, COSTELLO,

WOLF, COHEN, REHBERG, TIAHRT and FRELINGHUYSEN changed their vote from "aye" to "no."

Mr. GOODE changed his vote from "no" to "aye."

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. There being no further amendments, the question is on the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended.

The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended, was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. KIND) having assumed the chair, Mr. HASTINGS, Acting Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 569) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to authorize appropriations for sewer overflow control grants, pursuant to House Resolution 214, he reported the bill back to the House with an amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

Is a separate vote demanded on the amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute reported from the Committee of the Whole? If not, the question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT OFFERED BY MR. MCHENRY

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. MCHENRY. In the current form, I am.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. MCHENRY moves to recommit the bill H.R. 569 to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure with instructions to report back the same forthwith with the following amendment:

At the end of the bill, add the following (and conform the table of contents accordingly):

SEC. 3. LIMITATION ON THE USE OF FUNDS.

None of the funds authorized by this Act, including the amendments made by this Act, may be used—

(1) to lobby or retain a lobbyist for the purpose of influencing a Federal, State, or local governmental entity or officer; or

(2) to pay for expenses related to the membership of any individual or entity in an organization or association.

□ 1640

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from North Carolina is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, this motion to recommit would reinforce existing Federal law by making it clear that none of the funds authorized in this act would be used for lobbying or to retain lobbyists in order to attempt to influence Federal, State or local governments or officials within said governments.

This motion to recommit is an insurance policy that guarantees this bill won't be a kickback to K Street. This majority was elected on ending the K Street Project. In House Resolution 6, section 202, they changed rule XXIII to ensure that the K Street Project is ended.

If those words on opening day are to become a reality, I encourage the majority to support this motion to recommit that ensures that a K Street-type project would not be further propagated in this legislation.

There is a simple principle here; put plainly, I am asking the Members of the House to follow their own rules set up on opening day. From time to time, it is important to challenge Congress's words by calling them to action. And if this new majority is to live by the words they set up by opening day, then they should support this motion to recommit.

I would like to yield to my colleague from Georgia, Congressman PRICE.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him for his simple motion to recommit.

This really is a simple motion to recommit. What it says is that the money that is authorized and appropriated should go for its intended purposes. It would expand upon existing law by specifically prohibiting Federal funds from being used to pay for membership in any association or organization. It is important to make clear that the funds should only be used for the purposes intended by Congress, mainly the construction of facilities and infrastructure to treat combined sewer overflows.

Now, while associations and organizations can sometimes provide very meaningful opportunities for collaboration and knowledge dissemination, it would not be appropriate to use scarce, hard-earned Federal taxpayer dollars to pay for membership in such associations.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know if my colleagues are aware of this, but some of these dues in these associations and organizations run up to \$48,000 to \$50,000 a year. Certainly, hard-earned taxpayer money should not go for that purpose. So, in the spirit of responsible spending and to decrease the abuse of hard-earned taxpayer dollars, I urge the adoption of this motion to recommit.

Mr. MCHENRY. Reclaiming my time, I would like to in particular talk to my 13 colleagues on the Democrat side, Mr.

Speaker, and they realize that a motion to recommit is not a procedural motion; it is actually policy. And when those 13 Democrats voted for the recommit on the card check legislation, they said clearly they understand the underlying policy in a motion to recommit.

We are talking policy here today, Mr. Speaker. In this House, if the Democrat majority was truly elected and is committed to severing the link between legislation and lobbyists, they will vote for this motion to recommit. This motion to recommit is a gut check for Congress, especially the new Members of this body who have not been here before this last election cycle. It is gut check time for them, for them to explain to their constituents that they like the idea of limiting lobbyists' influence, and whether or not they are willing to fulfill that vote here on the House floor today.

This truly is an insurance policy that guarantees this bill won't simply be a kickback to K Street by this new majority.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the motion?

Mr. OBERSTAR. No. I seek to speak on the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Minnesota is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, the operative provision of H.R. 569, section 221, provides, "The administrator may make grants to States for the purpose of providing grants to a municipality or municipal entity for planning, design and construction of treatment works to intercept, transport, control or treat municipal combined sewer overflows and sanitary sewer overflows." It says nothing about paying lobbyists, retaining a lobbyist or influencing Federal, State or local government entity or officer. But if the gentleman is concerned that somehow money might be diverted in that, we are fully prepared to accept the amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion to recommit will be followed by 5-minute votes on the question of passing the bill and on suspending the rules and passing H.R. 710.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 425, noes 0, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 124]

AYES—425

Ackerman	Davis, David	Issa
Aderholt	Davis, Lincoln	Jackson (IL)
Akin	Davis, Tom	Jackson-Lee
Alexander	Deal (GA)	(TX)
Allen	DeFazio	Jefferson
Altmire	DeGette	Jindal
Andrews	Delahunt	Johnson (GA)
Arcuri	Dent	Johnson (IL)
Baca	Diaz-Balart, L.	Johnson, E. B.
Bachmann	Diaz-Balart, M.	Johnson, Sam
Bachus	Dicks	Jones (NC)
Baird	Dingell	Jones (OH)
Baker	Doggett	Jordan
Baldwin	Donnelly	Kagen
Barrett (SC)	Doolittle	Kanjorski
Barrow	Doyle	Kaptur
Bartlett (MD)	Drake	Keller
Barton (TX)	Dreier	Kennedy
Bean	Duncan	Kildee
Becerra	Edwards	Kilpatrick
Berkley	Ehlers	Kind
Berman	Ellison	King (IA)
Berry	Ellsworth	King (NY)
Biggert	Emanuel	Kingston
Bilbray	Emerson	Kirk
Bilirakis	Engel	Klein (FL)
Bishop (GA)	English (PA)	Kline (MN)
Bishop (NY)	Eshoo	Knollenberg
Bishop (UT)	Etheridge	Kucinich
Blackburn	Everett	Kuhl (NY)
Blumenauer	Fallin	LaHood
Blunt	Farr	Lamborn
Boehner	Feeney	Lampson
Bonner	Ferguson	Langevin
Boozman	Filner	Lantos
Boren	Flake	Larsen (WA)
Boswell	Forbes	Latham
Boucher	Fortenberry	LaTourette
Boustany	Fossella	Lee
Boyd (FL)	Fox	Levin
Boyd (KS)	Frank (MA)	Lewis (CA)
Brady (PA)	Franks (AZ)	Lewis (GA)
Brady (TX)	Frelinghuysen	Lewis (KY)
Braley (IA)	Gallely	Linder
Brown (SC)	Garrett (NJ)	Lipinski
Brown, Corrine	Gerlach	LoBiondo
Brown-Waite,	Giffords	Loeb sack
Ginny	Gilchrest	Lofgren, Zoe
Buchanan	Gillibrand	Lowe
Burgess	Gillmor	Lucas
Burton (IN)	Gingrey	Lungren, Daniel
Butterfield	Gohmert	E.
Buyer	Gonzalez	Lynch
Calvert	Goode	Mack
Campbell (CA)	Goodlatte	Mahoney (FL)
Cannon	Gordon	Maloney (NY)
Cantor	Granger	Manzullo
Capito	Graves	Marchant
Capps	Green, Al	Markey
Capuano	Green, Gene	Marshall
Cardoza	Grijalva	Matheson
Carnahan	Gutierrez	Matsui
Carney	Hall (NY)	McCarthy (CA)
Carson	Hall (TX)	McCarthy (NY)
Carter	Hare	McCaul (TX)
Castle	Harman	McCollum (MN)
Castor	Hastert	McCotter
Chabot	Hastings (FL)	McCrery
Chandler	Hastings (WA)	McDermott
Clarke	Hayes	McGovern
Clay	Heller	McHenry
Cleaver	Hensarling	McHugh
Clyburn	Herger	McIntyre
Coble	Herseth	McKeon
Cohen	Higgins	McMorris
Cole (OK)	Hill	Rodgers
Conaway	Hinche	McNerney
Conyers	Hinojosa	McNulty
Cooper	Hirono	Meehan
Costa	Hobson	Meek (FL)
Costello	Hodes	Meeks (NY)
Courtney	Hoekstra	Melancon
Cramer	Holden	Mica
Crenshaw	Holt	Michaud
Crowley	Honda	Millender-
Cuellar	Hooley	McDonald
Culberson	Hoyer	Miller (FL)
Cummings	Hulshof	Miller (MI)
Davis (AL)	Hunter	Miller (NC)
Davis (CA)	Inglis (SC)	Miller, Gary
Davis (IL)	Inslee	Miller, George
Davis (KY)	Israel	Mitchell

Mollohan	Rogers (AL)	Stearns
Moore (KS)	Rogers (KY)	Stupak
Moore (WI)	Rogers (MI)	Sullivan
Moran (KS)	Rohrabacher	Sutton
Moran (VA)	Ros-Lehtinen	Tancredo
Murphy (CT)	Roskam	Tanner
Murphy, Patrick	Ross	Tauscher
Murphy, Tim	Rothman	Taylor
Murtha	Roybal-Allard	Terry
Musgrave	Royce	Thompson (CA)
Myrick	Ruppersberger	Thompson (MS)
Nadler	Rush	Thornberry
Napolitano	Ryan (OH)	Tiahrt
Neal (MA)	Ryan (WI)	Tiberi
Neugebauer	Salazar	Tierney
Nunes	Sali	Towns
Oberstar	Sánchez, Linda	Turner
Obey	T.	Udall (CO)
Oliver	Sanchez, Loretta	Udall (NM)
Ortiz	Sarbanes	Upton
Pallone	Saxton	Van Hollen
Pascarell	Schakowsky	Velázquez
Pastor	Schiff	Visclosky
Paul	Schmidt	Walberg
Payne	Schwartz	Walden (OR)
Pearce	Scott (GA)	Walsh (NY)
Pence	Scott (VA)	Walz (MN)
Perlmutter	Sensenbrenner	Wamp
Peterson (MN)	Serrano	Wasserman
Peterson (PA)	Sessions	Schultz
Petri	Sestak	Waters
Pickering	Shadegg	Watson
Pitts	Shays	Watt
Platts	Shea-Porter	Waxman
Poe	Sherman	Weiner
Pomeroy	Shinkus	Welch (VT)
Porter	Shuler	Weldon (FL)
Price (GA)	Shuster	Weller
Price (NC)	Simpson	Westmoreland
Pryce (OH)	Sires	Wexler
Putnam	Skelton	Whitfield
Radanovich	Slaughter	Wicker
Rahall	Smith (NE)	Wilson (NM)
Ramstad	Smith (NJ)	Wilson (OH)
Rangel	Smith (TX)	Wilson (SC)
Regula	Smith (WA)	Wolf
Rehberg	Snyder	Woolsey
Reichert	Solis	Wu
Renzi	Souder	Wynn
Reyes	Space	Yarmuth
Reynolds	Spratt	Young (AK)
Rodriguez	Stark	Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—8

Abercrombie	Cubin	Fattah
Bono	Davis, Jo Ann	Larson (CT)
Camp (MI)	DeLauro	

□ 1711

So the motion to recommit was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the instructions of the House on the motion to recommit, I report the bill, H.R. 569, back to the House with an amendment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment:

At the end of the bill, add the following (and conform the table of contents accordingly):

SEC. 3. LIMITATION ON THE USE OF FUNDS.

None of the funds authorized by this Act, including the amendments made by this Act, may be used—

(1) to lobby or retain a lobbyist for the purpose of influencing a Federal, State, or local governmental entity or officer; or

(2) to pay for expenses related to the membership of any individual or entity in an organization or association.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the amendment.

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 367, nays 58, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 125]

YEAS—367

Ackerman	Davis (IL)	Honda
Aderholt	Davis (KY)	Hooley
Alexander	Davis, David	Hoyer
Allen	Davis, Lincoln	Hulshof
Altmire	Davis, Tom	Hunter
Andrews	DeFazio	Inslee
Arcuri	DeGette	Israel
Baca	Delahunt	Jackson (IL)
Bachmann	Dent	Jackson-Lee
Bachus	Diaz-Balart, L.	(TX)
Baird	Diaz-Balart, M.	Jefferson
Baker	Dicks	Jindal
Baldwin	Dingell	Johnson (GA)
Barrow	Doggett	Johnson (IL)
Bean	Donnelly	Johnson, E. B.
Becerra	Doolittle	Jones (NC)
Berkley	Doyle	Jones (OH)
Berman	Drake	Kagen
Berry	Dreier	Kanjorski
Bilirakis	Duncan	Kaptur
Bishop (GA)	Edwards	Keller
Bishop (NY)	Ehlers	Kennedy
Blumenauer	Ellison	Kildee
Blunt	Ellsworth	Kilpatrick
Boehner	Emanuel	Kind
Bonner	Emerson	King (NY)
Boozman	Engel	Kirk
Boren	English (PA)	Klein (FL)
Boswell	Eshoo	Kline (MN)
Boucher	Etheridge	Knollenberg
Boustany	Everett	Kucinich
Boyd (FL)	Fallin	Kuhl (NY)
Boyd (KS)	Farr	LaHood
Brady (PA)	Ferguson	Lampson
Braley (IA)	Filner	Langevin
Brown (SC)	Forbes	Lantos
Brown, Corrine	Fortenberry	Larsen (WA)
Brown-Waite,	Fossella	Latham
Ginny	Frank (MA)	LaTourette
Buchanan	Frelinghuysen	Lee
Burton (IN)	Gallely	Levin
Butterfield	Gerlach	Lewis (CA)
Buyer	Giffords	Lewis (GA)
Calvert	Gilchrest	Lewis (KY)
Cantor	Gillibrand	Lipinski
Capito	Gillmor	LoBiondo
Capps	Gohmert	Loeb sack
Capuano	Gonzalez	Lofgren, Zoe
Cardoza	Goodlatte	Lowe
Carnahan	Gordon	Lucas
Carney	Granger	Lungren, Daniel
Carson	Graves	E.
Castle	Green, Al	Lynch
Castor	Green, Gene	Mahoney (FL)
Chabot	Grijalva	Maloney (NY)
Chandler	Gutierrez	Manzullo
Clarke	Hall (NY)	Markey
Clay	Hare	Marshall
Cleaver	Harman	Matheson
Clyburn	Hastert	Matsui
Coble	Hastings (FL)	McCarthy (CA)
Cohen	Hastings (WA)	McCarthy (NY)
Cole (OK)	Hayes	McCollum (MN)
Conaway	Heller	McCotter
Conyers	Herseth	McCrery
Cooper	Higgins	McDermott
Costa	Hill	McGovern
Costello	Hinche	McHugh
Courtney	Hinojosa	McIntyre
Cramer	Hirono	McKeon
Crenshaw	Hobson	McMorris
Crowley	Hodes	Rodgers
Cuellar	Hoekstra	McNerney
Cummings	Holden	McNulty
Davis (AL)	Holt	Meehan
Davis (CA)		

Meek (FL) Regula
 Meeks (NY) Rehberg
 Melancon Reichert
 Mica Renzi
 Michaud Reyes
 Millender Reynolds
 McDonald Rodriguez
 Miller (MI) Rogers (AL)
 Miller (NC) Rogers (KY)
 Miller, Gary Rogers (MI)
 Miller, George Rohrabacher
 Mitchell Ros-Lehtinen
 Mollohan Roskam
 Moore (KS) Ross
 Moore (WI) Rothman
 Moran (VA) Roybal-Allard
 Murphy (CT) Ruppertsberger
 Murphy, Patrick Rush
 Murphy, Tim Ryan (OH)
 Murtha Salazar
 Myrick Sánchez, Linda
 Nadler T.
 Napolitano Sanchez, Loretta
 Neal (MA) Sarbanes
 Nunes Saxton
 Oberstar Schakowsky
 Obey Schiff
 Olver Schmidt
 Ortiz Schwartz
 Pallone Scott (GA)
 Pascarell Scott (VA)
 Pastor Serrano
 Payne Sestak
 Pearce Shays
 Perlmutter Shea-Porter
 Peterson (MN) Sherman
 Peterson (PA) Shimkus
 Petri Shuler
 Pickering Shuster
 Platts Simpson
 Poe Sires
 Pomeroy Skelton
 Porter Slaughter
 Price (NC) Smith (NE)
 Pryce (OH) Smith (NJ)
 Putnam Smith (TX)
 Radanovich Smith (WA)
 Rahall Snyder
 Ramstad Solis
 Rangel Souder

NAYS—58

Akin Garrett (NJ)
 Barrett (SC) Gingrey
 Bartlett (MD) Goode
 Barton (TX) Hall (TX)
 Biggert Hensarling
 Bilbray Herger
 Bishop (UT) Inglis (SC)
 Blackburn Issa
 Brady (TX) Johnson, Sam
 Burgess Jordan
 Campbell (CA) King (IA)
 Cannon Kingston
 Carter Shadegg
 Conaway Lamborn
 Culberson Linder
 Deal (GA) Mack
 Feeney Marchant
 Flake McCaul (TX)
 Foxx McHenry
 Franks (AZ) Miller (FL)
 Moran (KS)

NOT VOTING—8

Abercrombie Cubin
 Bono Davis, Jo Ann
 Camp (MI) DeLauro
 Fattah
 Larson (CT)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO
TEMPORE.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Two minutes remain in this vote.

□ 1720

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey changed his vote from “yea” to “nay.” So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CHARLIE W. NORWOOD LIVING
ORGAN DONATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the bill, H.R. 710, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 710, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 422, nays 0, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 126]

YEAS—422

Ackerman Clyburn
 Aderholt Coble
 Akin Cohen
 Alexander Cole (OK)
 Allen Conaway
 Altmire Conyers
 Andrews Cooper
 Arcuri Costa
 Baca Costello
 Bachmann Courtney
 Bachus Cramer
 Baird Crenshaw
 Baker Crowley
 Baldwin Cuellar
 Barlett (SC) Culberson
 Barrow Cummings
 Bartlett (MD) Davis (AL)
 Barton (TX) Davis (CA)
 Bean Davis (IL)
 Becerra Davis (KY)
 Berkley Davis, David
 Berman Davis, Lincoln
 Berry Davis, Tom
 Biggert Deal (GA)
 Bilbray DeFazio
 Bilirakis DeGette
 Bishop (GA) Delahunt
 Bishop (NY) Dent
 Bishop (UT) Diaz-Balart, L.
 Blackburn Diaz-Balart, M.
 Blumenauer Dicks
 Blunt Dingell
 Boehner Doggett
 Bonner Donnelly
 Boozman Doolittle
 Boren Doyle
 Boswell Drake
 Boucher Dreier
 Boustany Duncan
 Boyd (FL) Edwards
 Boyd (KS) Ehlers
 Brady (PA) Ellison
 Brady (TX) Ellsworth
 Braley (IA) Emanuel
 Brown (SC) Emerson
 Brown, Corrine Engel
 Brown-Waite, Ginny English (PA)
 Buchanan Eshoo
 Burgess Etheridge
 Burton (IN) Everett
 Butterfield Fallin
 Buyer Farr
 Calvert Feeney
 Campbell (CA) Ferguson
 Cannon Filner
 Cantor Flake
 Capito Forbes
 Capps Fortenberry
 Capuano Fossella
 Cardoza Foxx
 Carnahan Frank (MA)
 Carney Franks (AZ)
 Carson Frelinghuysen
 Carter Gallegly
 Castle Garrett (NJ)
 Castor Gerlach
 Chabot Giffords
 Chandler Gilchrest
 Clarke Gillibrand
 Clay Gillmor
 Cleaver Gingrey
 Gohmert

Lampson
 Langevin
 Lantos
 Larsen (WA)
 Latham
 LaTourette
 Lee
 Levin
 Lewis (CA)
 Lewis (GA)
 Lewis (KY)
 Linder
 Lipinski
 LoBiondo
 Loebuck
 Lofgren, Zoe
 Lowey
 Lucas
 Lungren, Daniel
 E.
 Mack
 Mahoney (FL)
 Maloney (NY)
 Manzullo
 Marchant
 Markey
 Marshall
 Matheson
 Matsui
 McCarthy (CA)
 McCarthy (NY)
 McCaul (TX)
 McCollum (MN)
 McCotter
 McCrery
 McDermott
 McGovern
 McHenry
 McHugh
 McIntyre
 McKeon
 McMorris
 Rodgers
 McNerney
 McNulty
 Meehan
 Meek (FL)
 Meeks (NY)
 Melancon
 Mica
 Michaud
 Millender-
 McDonald
 Miller (FL)
 Miller (MI)
 Miller (NC)
 Miller, Gary
 Mitchell
 Mollohan
 Moore (KS)
 Moore (WI)
 Moran (KS)
 Moran (VA)
 Murphy (CT)
 Murphy, Patrick
 Murphy, Tim
 Murtha
 Musgrave
 Myrick
 Nadler
 Napolitano

NOT VOTING—11

Abercrombie Davis, Jo Ann
 Bono DeLauro
 Camp (MI) Fattah
 Cubin Larson (CT)
 Lynch
 Miller, George
 Pomeroy

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised 2 minutes remain in this vote.

□ 1728

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: “A bill to amend the National Organ Transplant Act to provide that criminal penalties do not apply to paired donations of human kidneys, and for other purposes.”.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit this statement for the RECORD and regret that I could not be present today, Wednesday, March 7, 2007 to vote on rollcall vote Nos. 123, 124, 125 and 126 due to a family medical matter.

Had I been present, I would have voted:

"Nay" on rollcall vote No. 123 on an amendment to H.R. 569 to prohibit the bill's authorization levels or other provisions from taking effect if they would result in costs to the federal government;

"Aye" on rollcall vote No. 124 on the motion to recommit H.R. 569 with instructions;

"Aye" on rollcall vote No. 125 on passage of H.R. 569, the Water Quality Investment Act;

"Aye" on rollcall vote No. 126 on the suspension of the rules and passage of H.R. 710, the Charlie W. Norwood Living Organ Donation Act.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. 202, PROVIDING FOR EXPENSES OF CERTAIN COMMITTEES OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN 110TH CONGRESS

Mr. ARCURI, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-34) on the resolution (H. Res. 219) providing for consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 202) providing for the expenses of certain committees of the House of Representatives in the One Hundred Tenth Congress, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, March 5, and Tuesday, March 6, I was detained because of my representation of the United States House of Representatives at a commemoration commemorating the 50th year of independence of the nation-state of Ghana.

If I had been present, on rollcall No. 122, H. Res. 140, supporting the goals of International Women's Day, I would have voted "yea"; on rollcall No. 121, H. Res. 89, honoring the life and achievements of the late Dr. John Garang de Mabior, I would have voted "yea"; rollcall vote No. 120, H.R. 497, the Brigadier General Francis Marion Memorial Act, I would have voted "yea"; and rollcall No. 119, to amend Public Law to extend the authorization for establishing a memorial in the District of Columbia to honor veterans who served in the Armed Forces, I would have voted "yea."

□ 1730

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MATHESON). The Chair will entertain 1-minute requests.

COUEY GUILTY VERDICTS

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, earlier this afternoon, justice was finally rendered in the guilty verdicts in the kidnapping, assault, rape and murder of Jessica Lunsford. Jessica's family lives in my district, and the Nation's sympathy certainly went out to the Lunsford family when Jessica went missing.

Today's verdict obviously is one that we hope that if Mr. Couey has a conscience that he will not appeal this decision. However, Americans must realize that John Couey is one of thousands of sexual predators around the Nation. It is very sad, but parents in every neighborhood and community should remain vigilant in protecting their children from strangers.

Certainly our hearts and prayers go out to Mark, Archie and Ruth Lunsford. I hope that the guilty verdict today provides some closure for the family and that they feel that justice has been served.

We must also remember that Jessica Lunsford was the emphasis behind the Jessica Lunsford Act, which was signed into law.

TWO-STATE SOLUTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

(Mr. ENGEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, we had the honor of listening to King Abdullah of Jordan and his speech before. I must be candid and say that I was somewhat disappointed in some of the things that he mentioned.

When he talked about the plan in Riyadh for two states living side by side, we all, of course, hope for that, but the plan in Riyadh forces Israel to go back to the 1967 borders, which are indefensible and is really a nonstarter.

If the Palestinians really want peace in the region, then they know what they have to do. They need to do three things, and the Hamas government needs to do three things. They need to recognize the right of Israel to exist, they need to abide by all previous agreements signed by the Palestinians, and they need to renounce terror and violence.

I would have liked the King to have said that. I think that would have been most hopeful, but it is important that all of us that want peace in the Middle East work to the ultimate solution, which is two states in peace, living side by side, an Arab Palestinian state and Jewish Israeli state, and it can only happen if the Arabs recognize Israel's right to exist.

PEACHCARE

(Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise again to address the impending crisis threatening Georgia's PeachCare program.

In just 4 days, no new children will be permitted to enroll. The program will have a \$131 million shortfall, and neither the State of Georgia nor the Congress will have acted to save PeachCare.

As Members of Congress, it is hard to imagine our children being uninsured, yet thousands of children in Georgia face that harsh reality every day. That is unacceptable. No child should be without health care.

Congress and the State of Georgia owe it to these children to ensure that the PeachCare program survives.

PRESIDENT SHOULD NOT PARDON LIBBY

(Mr. ELLISON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, yesterday a jury here in Washington convicted Scooter Libby, the Vice President's former chief of staff, of obstruction of justice, giving false statements to the FBI and perjury. Libby's attorneys say they will appeal. Meanwhile, the White House remains silent about whether or not the President will pardon Mr. Libby.

From the very beginning, this case has been about more than just Libby's attempts to lie to a Federal prosecutor. As egregious as that is, and Mr. Libby should be punished for it, perhaps even worse are the revelations that came out during this trial of how the Bush administration operated when it came to issues of national security.

Testimony from Libby's trial shows the great lengths the Bush administration was willing to go to silence opponents of the war. In the case of Valerie Plame, the administration was more than willing to out an intelligence operative. It did not matter that they may have been jeopardizing her life or the lives of other intelligence agents that she may have been working with. All the administration cared about was silencing a critic of the war.

President Bush should realize how serious this case is and should state for the record today that he will not pardon Mr. Libby.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

OPPOSITION TO EXPANDED MEXICAN TRUCKING IN THE U.S.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, in just a matter of weeks, thousands of Mexican trucks will stream across America's southern border and pour onto U.S. highways throughout the country.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has given 100 Mexican trucking companies the green light to unleash an unlimited number of trucks onto the highways of America as part of a 1-year pilot program.

Right now, Mexican trucks are only permitted to travel inside a 25-mile commercial zone along the U.S. border, but, soon, thousands of Mexican trucks will have full access to all the Nation's roads.

Allowing low-paid drivers and substandard trucks to travel our Nation's roads will endanger the safety of American citizens. It will cost thousands of American jobs.

As an extension of NAFTA, this program is just another example of U.S. trade policies that fail American workers. Before NAFTA, our Nation ran a trade surplus with Mexico. Now, the U.S. runs a \$65 billion annual trade deficit with Mexico. The U.S. has lost 3 million manufacturing jobs in just the past 6 years.

Launching this pilot program in the name of free trade is just one more example of how our government continues to give away American jobs. This program will not only hurt the economy but will put our national security at risk.

The Department of Transportation claims that all of these Mexican trucks will be inspected by U.S. officials in Mexico and at the border, but, Mr. Speaker, less than 10 percent of all Mexican trucks entering the commercial zone are inspected now, only 10 percent. The U.S. cannot afford to send inspectors to Mexico when only a fraction of the hundreds of thousands of U.S. truck companies are inspected each year.

With no guaranteed way to inspect the cargo of each and every truck, this program could easily aid terrorist activities, the entry of illegal drugs and illegal human smuggling.

Mr. Speaker, for the sake of appeasing Mexico, our government is not protecting the national security of this country and the future of our economy. This program does nothing but endanger the safety of American citizens, and it is unacceptable.

I hope the American people will continue to contact this administration to tell them of their outrage and disappointment.

□ 1740

Mr. Speaker, before I close, this is from a heading in an eastern North Carolina paper that says, "Bush Deci-

sion on Mexican Trucks Promotes Era." People are upset and mad. I want to read just very briefly, "The news that Mexican trucks will be allowed to haul freight deep into the United States drew angry reaction Friday from labor leaders, safety advocates and Members of Congress." They said, "Mexico has substandard trucks and low-paid drivers that will threaten national security, cost thousands of jobs and endanger motorists on the northern side of the Mexican border."

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the people of this great Nation will listen to these discussions and debates by my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, because if we are concerned about national security, we should not allow these trucks to have free access to the roads of the American people.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

GLIDER PILOTS OF WORLD WAR II

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the glider pilots of World War II.

Glider planes were lightweight aircraft without engines that were used to drop supplies and reinforcement personnel for troops and surveillance. They were very efficient, because they made no noise and could fly into the enemy areas undetected.

The gliders would be towed by larger planes in order to take off, but then would fly and land on their own. The glider pilots flew dangerous missions and were constantly at risk for being shot down. Glider pilots were instrumental in the invasion of Normandy on D-Day, despite the fact that pilots had to improvise on landings, since no known landing strips were known to be behind enemy lines.

Later in the war, the Germans would plant wooden poles in open fields to prevent glider pilots from landing. The U.S. Army Air Forces began training glider pilots in 1942. The program quickly grew during the war. Eventually, over 6,500 men were trained to be glider pilots.

Throughout World War II, the glider pilots flew eight successful missions. The glider pilots' first mission occurred on July 19, 1942, Operation Husky, which was called for the glider pilots to carry British airborne troops into Sicily. Despite the heavy casualties from landing at the sea, the glider pilots completed their mission.

In March of 1944, the glider pilots completed Operation Broadway in Burma. The glider pilots took the Jap-

anese completely by surprise, carrying troops, airborne engineers and equipment by night. They seized and prepared landing strips for forthcoming transport planes and evacuated the wounded. The glider pilots accomplished this feat in 2 hours, completing a mission that would have taken 2 months by ambulance.

Perhaps the most famous mission of the glider pilots was the Battle of Normandy. On D-Day the glider pilots participated in the largest combined airborne and seaborne invasion in history. They carried troops of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Division and their equipment to landing areas behind enemy lines. Their work helped to secure victory in World War II.

Mr. Speaker, each year we lose more and more of these courageous veterans. I believe Congress must recognize their accomplishments for the future generations of our veterans. That is why I have introduced House Concurrent Resolution 42. This bill recognizes the glider pilots and the many troops who put their lives on the line to defend the ideas and the freedoms of our country. All of our glider missions were successful. Unfortunately, casualties were suffered.

On March 20, "Silent Wings," a documentary on these great pilots, will be released. The documentary features interviews with glider pilots, Members of Congress and media icons. I will be sponsoring a viewing of this powerful film on the evening of March 20.

I hope you will all join me to commemorate these veterans. We must all remember and teach future generations about the sacrifices that glider pilots and all veterans made for our country. I urge my colleagues to support the glider pilots and cosponsor H. Con. Res. 42.

TOUGHER BORDER CONTROL POLICIES WILL HELP REDUCE CRIME IN THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the sorry State of our Nation's borders. As we have read in the newspapers every day, we have an estimated 12 to 15 million people living illegally in the United States.

Now, I understand that this is a divisive issue for many people, even for some in this body. I, myself, understand the needs of Florida's citrus growers and sugar cane farmers to have a reliable source of agricultural workers. But as my constituents tell me all the time, what part of illegal doesn't Congress understand?

I know that we need a guest worker program, but not one that includes amnesty or a pathway to citizenship, as some have called it. A guest worker program should be just that, a program

where migrant workers are guests in our country and return home when their visa expires.

Unfortunately, that is not what happens today. We have hundreds of thousands of people sneaking across our borders every day. We don't know who they are, where they are headed or what their intentions are.

Some of those on the other side of the aisle make the argument that the people sneaking across our borders are just good honest people looking to make a better life for themselves. That may indeed be the case for some. But in a post-9/11 world, we can't take that chance. Many of them are common crooks, low-level thugs, brutal gang members, drug dealers, murderers, rapists or kidnappers or serial killers.

One example recently in Florida took place with the brazen abduction of a young man by the name of Clay Moore in Manatee county, which is just outside of my congressional district. Thirteen year-old Clay was waiting for a school bus with other kids when a man driving a pickup truck pulled up alongside of them and kidnapped Clay by gun point. Law enforcement issued an AMBER Alert and set up a concerted manhunt to find Clay and his abductor.

Unlike the case of Jessica Lunsford or Sarah Lunde, in this case, the story ends with good news, not a body bag. Clay managed to escape, but not after being driven to the middle of the woods, duct-taped to a tree for several hours. He freed himself by using a safety pin he had hidden in his mouth to cut the duct tape holding him to the tree, and then he called home for help.

Clay is a brave and resourceful young man to have gotten away without being harmed. I can only wonder if he and his family watched old reruns of MacGyver to learn the safety pin trick.

This story ended well for Clay. But the bad news for America is that the alleged abductor was an illegal immigrant who had been deported once from the country. A news report from the Bradenton Herald even describes the problems authorities had tracking him down. "Obtaining the warrants took longer than expected due to the suspected kidnapper's multiple aliases. Beltran-Moreno is an undocumented immigrant who at one time was deported from the United States," they said. When I came down to the floor earlier, the authorities still had not caught Beltran-Moreno. News reports indicated that he was trying to make it to Mexico to escape prosecution and punishment.

Mr. Speaker, if our immigration laws had been enforced and if we had stronger border security measures in place, this kidnapper would not have been in America and would not have had the opportunity to kidnap young Clay Moore. Instead, a dangerous criminal flees, leaving his whereabouts unknown and his motives unclear. This is unacceptable.

The House has passed strong border security legislation in the past, but the

Senate is taking its open path, a path towards amnesty. My constituents in and the constituents of many in this Chamber believe that that is absolutely the wrong path to take. Americans deserve real security and real results.

With other like-minded Members of Congress, I will work to pass legislation that keeps illegal kidnappers and illegal aliens like Beltran-Moreno off our streets and away from our children.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. BERKLEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL AND THE NATIONAL COMMISSION TO PLAN AND COORDINATE THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE WAR OF 1812

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce two related bills. The first would create a Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail to commemorate the Chesapeake Bay Campaign of the War of 1812. The second bill I am introducing would create a national commission to plan and coordinate the bicentennial celebration of the War of 1812.

The Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail would match some of the most important events of the War of 1812. The trail commemorating the only combined naval and land attack on the United States begins with June 1814 battles between the British Navy and the American Chesapeake flotilla in Saint Leonard's Creek in Calvert County and ends at Fort McHenry in Baltimore, where our National Anthem was composed and the British met their ultimate defeat.

□ 1750

Maryland is blessed with a multitude of historic and cultural attractions across the State. Fort McHenry is a classic example of this rich heritage and a centerpiece of the legislation I introduce today. Francis Scott Key best captured the essence of Fort McHenry in his poem written as a prisoner aboard a British frigate during the bombardment of the fort. The text of the poem later became our National Anthem.

For decades, my family has enjoyed Fort McHenry's history as well as its tremendous vistas of our beloved Chesapeake Bay. Just recently, I spent the morning there with my son, an avid birder and budding naturalist, exploring the wetland restoration area that abuts the fort.

The second bill I introduce today would create a Star Spangled Banner and War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission to plan and coordinate the bicentennial celebration of the War of 1812 and the composition of our National Anthem. The Commission would be made up of citizens from States that the National Park Service has determined to be the most historically significant, as well as National Park Service officials, historical experts and other individuals selected by congressional leadership.

With the bicentennial of the War of 1812 quickly approaching, we should move swiftly to approve this measure and enable the Commission to plan a suitable bicentennial celebration.

Mr. Speaker, the War of 1812 was a seminal moment in American history. Many refer to it as the "second war of independence." When the war began, our fragile experiment in democracy was still in its early stages, and the Nation found itself under attack from one of the most powerful countries in the world. Many wondered whether democracy could hold together through the trials of war. The War of 1812 proved that liberty and security are not mutually exclusive conditions and set the stage for the spread of democracy around the world.

Mr. Speaker, just this morning I met with War of 1812 experts and historic preservationists from throughout the State of Maryland at Fort McHenry. For years, these individuals have been dedicated advocates for creating the Star Spangled Banner Trail and Bicentennial Commission. This legislation represents a culmination of their interests and hard work. I am very proud to be introducing it today, and I hope my colleagues will join with me to pass both bills during this Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SALI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SALI addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

LANCE CORPORAL ANTHONY AGUIRRE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, "I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of officers appointed over me according to the regulations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God."

Each day, new Marines take this oath to serve and protect the United States and freedom-loving people. They live their lives by it, and they die by it.

LCpl Anthony Aguirre dreamed his whole life of taking this oath and becoming a member of this elite fighting force. Anthony was from Channelview, Texas. At a young age, he knew he wanted to be a Marine. He felt so compelled to serve our country that he took every opportunity to become involved in any military program that he could find, like the Junior ROTC at Channelview High School.

When he was in the Junior ROTC, Anthony was the company commander. During his senior year in high school, he achieved the rank of cadet captain. Many of those who were involved with the ROTC with Anthony remember him as a patriot. He always had a sense of duty to this country. Even after graduation, Anthony often stopped by the high school to proudly talk with the Junior ROTC cadets about the Marines. According to the ROTC instructor, Anthony wanted to be a Marine because he thought it was the toughest of military U.S. services.

Lance Corporal Aguirre joined the United States Marine Corps 1 year after graduating from Channelview High School and became a member of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force in Hawaii.

His sister, Christine, said that Anthony thought of doing nothing else with his life but being in the Marine Corps. So Anthony Aguirre joined the United States Marine Corps. He served our country in Iraq, but he met a warrior's fate a few days ago. This is a photograph of Anthony Aguirre. Anthony was killed in Iraq, and the funeral for him was today.

Let me tell you a little bit about the funeral, Mr. Speaker. As the funeral procession passed through the streets of Channelview, estimates were that over 8,000 people were there from the schools, the local refineries, the fire department and the neighborhoods. They stood on the side of the road for miles waving American flags for this Marine.

Anthony Aguirre was buried today in Highland, Texas. The high school flag was flown at half mast in his honor, and later the flag was given to his sister, Christine Castillo, and his brother, Earnesto Salinas. Tony had numerous other siblings and cousins.

Now I want to tell you how he died, Mr. Speaker. On February 26, 2007, at the age of 20, in an act of fearless courage, LCpl Aguirre put his life on the line for his brothers in arms. And while fighting the forces of evil in Al Anbar Province in Iraq, Anthony stepped on an improvised explosive device. IEDs, as they are called, are a coward's way of killing U.S. soldiers, women, children and the elderly.

But he didn't immediately jump, as would be a reflection or a reaction for most of us. He kept his foot on the IED and he told the other 20 Marines standing around him to clear the area and take cover. When he saw that they were out of harm's way, he took his

foot off the device. He gave his life so that other Marines could live.

When this group of Marines reported back to their commander, they told him that Tony had just saved their lives. The commander immediately knew they were referring to LCpl Anthony Aguirre.

Amazing men, these young guns of the Marine Corps of today.

On a road called Crosby-Lynchburg in my district, there are flags mounted along this rural road in honor of the brave life of Lance Corporal Aguirre. And as the community laid another one of America's sons to rest today, the catalog of history is etched with another name of an extraordinary Texas hero and Marine.

Lance Corporal Aguirre died as he lived, for the Marines, for his brothers in arms.

Shakespeare put it best in Henry V when he echoes Aguirre's commitment to fellow warriors. He says, From this day to the ending of the world, we in it shall be remembered. We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; for he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother.

We shall remember Lance Corporal Aguirre. Semper Fi, Lance Corporal Aguirre. Semper Fi.

And that's just the way it is.

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE SCANDAL AT WALTER REED

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, the scandal at Walter Reed is not an isolated incident. It is directly related to our foreign policy of interventionism. There is a pressing need to reassess our now widely accepted role as the world's lone superpower. If we don't, we are destined to reduce our Nation to something far less powerful.

It has always been politically popular for politicians to promise they will keep us out of foreign wars. Likewise, it has been popular to advocate ending prolonged and painful conflicts, like the war in Korea and Vietnam, and now Iraq.

As recent as the campaign of 2000, it was quite popular to condemn nation building and reject the policy of policing the world in the wake of our involvement in Kosovo and Somalia. We were even promised a more humble foreign policy.

Nobody wins elections by promising to take us to war. But, once elected, many politicians greatly exaggerate the threat posed by a potential enemy, and the people too often carelessly ac-

cept the dubious reasons given to justify wars.

□ 1800

Opposition arises only when the true costs are felt here at home.

A foreign policy of interventionism costs so much money that we're forced to close military bases in the United States even as we're building them overseas. Interventionism is never good fiscal policy. Interventionism symbolizes an attitude of looking outward, toward empire, while diminishing the importance of maintaining a constitutional republic.

We close bases here at home—some want to close Walter Reed—while building bases in Arab and Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia. We worry about foreign borders while ignoring our own. We build permanent outposts in Muslim holy lands, occupy territory and prop up puppet governments. This motivates suicide terrorism against us.

Our policies naturally lead to resentment, which in turn leads to prolonged wars and increased casualties. We waste billions of dollars in Iraq while bases like Walter Reed fall into disrepair. This undermines our ability to care for the thousands of wounded we should have anticipated despite the rosy predictions that we would be greeted as liberators in Iraq.

Now comes the outrage.

Now Congress holds hearings.

Now comes the wringing of hands. I guess better late than never.

Clean it up. Paint the walls. Make Walter Reed look neat and tidy. But this won't solve our problems. We must someday look critically at the shortcomings of our foreign policy, a policy that needlessly and foolishly intervenes in places where we have no business being.

Voters spoke very clearly in November: They want the war to end. Yet Congress has taken no steps to defund or end a war it never should have condoned in the first place.

On the contrary, Congress plans to spend another \$100 billion or more in an upcoming Iraq funding bill, more than even the administration has requested. The 2007 military budget, \$700 billion, apparently is not enough. All of this is done under the slogan of supporting the troops, even though our policy guarantees more Americans will die and Walter Reed will continue to receive tens of thousands of casualties.

Every problem Congress and the administration creates requires more money to fix. The mantra remains the same: Spend more money even though we don't have it; borrow from the Chinese, or just print it. This policy of interventionism is folly, and it cannot continue forever. It will end, either because we wake up or because we go broke.

Interventionism always leads to unanticipated consequences and blowback, like a weakened, demoralized military; exploding deficits; billions of dollars wasted; increased inflation; less economic growth; an unstable

currency; painful stock market corrections; political demagoguery; lingering anger at home; and confusion about who is to blame.

These elements combine to create an environment that inevitably undermines personal liberty. Virtually all American wars have led to diminished civil liberties at home. Most of our mistakes can be laid at the doorstep of our failure to follow the Constitution. The Constitution, if we so desire, can provide needed guidance and a road map to restore our liberties and change our foreign policy. This is critical if we truly seek peace and prosperity.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with an apology. Last week, I was in the grocery store in Jacksonville, Florida. A veteran working part time told me about a friend who was at Walter Reed, and he had pictures showing the problems that were occurring there. He walked me to the car and said that there was no way he would ever vote again for a Republican after seeing what the pictures showed.

I couldn't believe what he was describing to me of a military facility. And I told him, "You can't believe everything that you see on the Internet." The next day, the very next day, the story was in the Washington Post. I am going back to that grocery store to personally apologize to that veteran. The fact that an active duty soldier was treated this way is inconceivable.

I did not vote for this war. The military is doing the job they were sent to do. There was a flaw in the mission from the beginning, and the flaw lies with us. American soldiers have performed admirably under trying conditions, conditions they were not trained for and conditions they should not be in. We won the war but lost the occupation. Our soldiers deserve better when they get back.

We can send 484 tons of money, \$12 billion, to Iraq for who knows what, but when it comes to the well-being of those soldiers, there is no money. According to the VA, it will cost \$1.7 billion to include all veterans in the VA health care system.

What are the priorities of this administration? There are all kinds of justifications, all kinds of sanctimony, frightening the American people into supporting a \$600 billion war in Iraq.

We have a \$3 trillion budget, and we are sending nearly \$1 trillion to a country of 28 million people.

We are building an embassy in Baghdad of 104 acres. This is six times larger than the United Nations compound in New York and two-thirds the acreage of Washington's National Mall. The embassy compound, 21 buildings on 104 acres, is the size of Vatican City and will be the largest in the world. It will employ over 5,500 people. The embassy will cost over \$1 billion. This is the priority of this Bush administration.

My colleagues, this war needs to come to an end. The American people want the troops home. This was the message sent loud and clear to the Bush administration during the November elections. Yet for some reason, they just don't get the message. Nearly 70 percent of the American people want us out of Iraq, and 100 percent deplore the treatment the administration is giving the veterans at the time of their most urgent need.

I will go back to Jacksonville and apologize to this veteran. I will be able to look him in the eye and say that this will not stand. We will make sure our soldiers come back to the best care this great Nation can provide.

I am reminded, in closing, of the words of the first President of the United States, George Washington, whose words are worth repeating at this time:

"The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional as to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their country."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE REALITY OF A MODERN DAY SCHOOL TEACHER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, when the question is asked, other than a family member, name one person who has made a difference in your life, the most often answered response is that of a favorite teacher. This simple response speaks volumes about the influence that an educator has on the lives of a young person and the future of our Nation.

The education profession has long been known for inadequate pay but a high job satisfaction. Teachers have been willing to forfeit material gain for the joy of seeing the eyes of their students light up when they discover a dif-

ficult concept or when they grasp a new idea. We have long understood that teachers truly shape the world by their work, and their greatest product is an educated child.

Lately, though, the job satisfaction that brought so many teachers into the profession seems to have left the classroom. Unfortunately, much of this development can be attributed to No Child Left Behind. The joy of teaching has been replaced by the pressure-filled staff meetings where educators spend their time talking, not about how to help a child learn but, rather, their school's test scores.

□ 1810

Morale in the education world has diminished, and more teachers are at wits end.

Recently, Holly Lindsay, a teacher in Lindsborg, Kansas, told me of her frustration with her profession. She writes, "I am a first-year teacher, and I am beginning to get very discouraged. I went into the teaching profession to help students learn and to encourage them to follow their dreams. However, I am finding that more and more of my time is spent preparing students for standardized tests. These tests do not prepare students for any career. They only teach students how to take a test. I am very disappointed with the education system right now. With all these tests, we don't have time to teach. It is also very frustrating when we have to prove our abilities with countless hours to show that we are highly qualified. In no other profession are there such lofty goals for their employees with such little benefit. I truly feel that the time and effort I put into teaching is not worth my while. No Child Left Behind is wonderful in theory, but impossible to carry out. Not every child is equal in ability, and no teacher should be expected to make it so."

The number of teachers leaving the profession is exceeding the number of teachers entering the profession by 23 percent. With over 25 percent of our teaching force eligible to retire within the next 10 years, this young educator's thoughts should be a warning. Teachers that have been career educators are bailing out as soon as they can because they do not want to deal with the unnecessary red tape and the growing pressures that are being placed upon them.

Another staggering fact is that one-third of new teachers quit the education profession within the first 3 years of teaching. In my rural Kansas district, if we have to shut the doors on rural schools it will not be because of lack of students, it will be because we cannot find the teachers to fill the teaching vacancies.

Congress must be sensitive to the responsibility we hold in making educators want to walk out of the classroom and never look back. Congress needs to look closely at our role and the trends and make sure that we are not encouraging this situation by continuing to overregulate the classroom.

We need to strive for improvements in our education system, but we must make sure that we are not legislating accountability simply for the sake of a sound bite. We must not take the joy and passion out of this noble profession by requiring things that are simply not possible.

This year, Congress is set to examine No Child Left Behind and potentially reauthorize it. While I voted against this law, I voted against No Child Left Behind, I look forward to being involved in the upcoming discussions about how we reform and change the education system. My hope is that we will look closely at the unintended realities that so many of our teachers face and will be willing to make the changes necessary to provide the policies that will help them succeed as they go about the business of educating our greatest asset, our young people, and fulfilling the jobs they so love.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GOHMERT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MOURNING THE PASSING OF FORMER ILLINOIS CONGRESSWOMAN CHARLOTTE THOMPSON REID

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a former member of this body and one of my personal role models, the distinguished gentlewoman from Illinois, Congresswoman Charlotte Thompson Reid, who passed away on January 25, 2007.

At the age of 93, Charlotte Reid leaves behind an extraordinary legacy of faithful public service that will be remembered always by the people of Illinois, and especially by those in her beloved hometown of Aurora.

As a young lady, Charlotte Reid attended Illinois College in Jacksonville and began her career as a professional singer on NBC radio. She was a singer under the name of Annette King on the

very popular Don McNeil's Breakfast Club early morning radio show. I don't think that most of the members of this body would remember that show, but I remember listening to it as a child as I was getting ready for school.

Following the show in 1962, after the sudden death of her husband, Frank, after he had won a primary and before the general election, Charlotte Reid was asked to step in and take his place for a seat as representative in the U.S. Congress for the 15th District of Illinois. Renowned for her hard work, gentle charm and integrity, Charlotte Reid won the election and went on to serve almost five distinguished terms in the House of Representatives. She was known for hosting events of singing and music at her Washington, D.C., home after hours. Legend is that she probably was the first woman to appear on the House floor in a pantsuit, an event that was noted by the minority leader Gerald Ford that day.

At a time when only a dozen women had a voice in the Chamber, Charlotte, or "Charlie" as she was known to her friends, inspired not just me but an entire generation of women to take leadership roles in our communities.

Following her time in Congress, Charlotte continued to serve her country in many different capacities, including as a member of the Federal Communications Commission, she had been appointed by President Nixon; the Board of Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services; and the Presidential Task Force on International Private Enterprise.

Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to take this opportunity to celebrate the legacy of one of Illinois' most venerable daughters. And to her family, I offer my heartfelt condolences and my prayers, especially her three children, including my good friend and former colleague in the Illinois General Assembly, State Representative Patricia Reid Lindner, her daughter, as well as her eight grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.

TRIBUTE TO LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON, 36TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as a proud Texan, I rise today to pay tribute to Lyndon Baines Johnson, the 36th President of the United States and the greatest "Education President" in the history of our Nation.

It is no exaggeration to say, Mr. Speaker, that Lyndon Baines Johnson's record of extending the benefits of education to all Americans in every region of the country, of every race and gender, irrespective of economic class or family background, remains unsurpassed. Lyndon Johnson recognized that the educated citizenry is a nation's greatest economic asset and most powerful guardian of its political liberties.

Mr. Speaker, Lyndon Johnson did more than any single American, living or dead, to

make the federal government a partner with states and localities in the vitally important work of educating the people of America, from pre-kindergarten to post-graduate school. It makes perfect sense, therefore, to name the headquarters building of the U.S. Department of Education in his honor.

Mr. Speaker, Lyndon Baines Johnson was one of the leading figures of the 20th century. This teacher who became a president served his country in numerous, distinguished ways, including as Lt. Commander in the U.S. Navy during World War II, as a Member of both houses of Congress, as Vice President of the United States, and as the 36th President of the United States.

Lyndon Baines Johnson was born on August 27, 1908, in Stonewall, Texas. In 1927, he enrolled in Southwest Texas State Teachers College at San Marcos, Texas (Texas State University-San Marcos). He took a leave of absence for a year to serve as principal and teach fifth, sixth, and seventh grades at Welhausen School, a Mexican-American school in the South Texas town of Cotulla. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in August 1930. After graduation he taught at Pearsall High School in Pearsall, Texas, and taught public speaking at Sam Houston High School in Houston, Texas. In the spring of 1931, his debate team won the district championship.

In a special election in 1937, Johnson won the U.S. House of Representatives seat representing the 10th Congressional District of Texas, defeating nine other candidates. He was re-elected to a full term in the 76th Congress and to each succeeding Congress until 1948.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Johnson became the first Member of Congress to volunteer for active duty in the armed forces (U.S. Navy), reporting for active duty on December 9, 1941. Johnson received the Silver Star from Gen. Douglas MacArthur for gallantry in action during an aerial combat mission over hostile positions in New Guinea on June 9, 1942. President Roosevelt ordered all Members of Congress in the armed forces to return to their offices, and Johnson was released from active duty on July 16, 1942.

In 1948, after a campaign in which he traveled by "newfangled" helicopter all over the state, Johnson won the primary by 87 votes and earned the nickname "Landslide Lyndon", and in the general election was elected to the U.S. Senate. He was elected Minority Leader of the Senate in 1953 and Majority Leader in 1955. He served in the U.S. Senate until he resigned to become Vice President in January 1961.

Lyndon Johnson became the 36th President of the United States on November 22, 1963, after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

During his administration, education was one of the many areas where President Johnson blazed new ground. He pursued numerous education initiatives, and signed many landmark education bills into law.

In 1963, President Johnson approved the Higher Education Facilities Act (P.L. 88-204) which authorized a five-year program of federal grants and loans for construction or improvement of public and private higher education academic facilities. This legislation was the largest education program enacted by

Congress since the National Defense Education Act of 1958, and it was the first broad education bill enacted in the post-World War II period that was not tied to national defense.

In 1964, Johnson signed the Library Services Act (P.L. 88-269) to make high quality public libraries more accessible to both urban and rural residents. The funds made available under this Act were used to construct as well as operate libraries, and to extend this program to cities as well as rural areas. Later that year, President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act (P.L. 88-352), which among its landmark provisions authorized federal authorities to sue for the desegregation of schools and to withhold federal funds from education institutions that practiced segregation.

In 1965, President Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (P.L. 89-10) at the former Junction Elementary School in Stonewall, Texas, where he first attended school. Sitting beside him as he signed the bill was his first teacher, Mrs. Kathryn Deadrich Loney. This legislation was the first general aid-to-education program ever adopted by Congress, and it provided programs to help educate disadvantaged children in urban and rural areas. Later that year, he also signed the Higher Education Act (P.L. 89-329), which was the first program approved by the U.S. Congress for scholarships to undergraduate students.

In 1965, President Johnson launched Project Head Start, as an eight-week summer program, to help break the cycle of poverty by providing pre-school children from low-income families with a comprehensive program to meet their emotional, social, health, nutritional, and psychological needs. Recruiting children from ages three to school-entry age, Head Start was enthusiastically received by education and child development specialists, community leaders, and parents across the nation. Currently, Head Start continues to serve children and their families each year in urban and rural areas in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Territories, as well as many migrant children.

In 1966, President Johnson signed the International Education Act (P.L. 89-698), which promoted international studies at U.S. colleges and universities.

In 1968, he signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Amendments of 1967 (P.L. 90-247), establishing bilingual education programs for non-English speaking children, and providing more funds for special education for disabled children. Later that year, he also signed the Handicapped Children's Early Education Assistance Act (P.L. 90-538), which authorized experimental programs for disabled children of pre-school age.

After leaving office, Lyndon Johnson returned to his native Texas and continued his involvement in public education. His presidential papers are housed at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum at the University of Texas, which in 1970 established the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs, The "LBJ School," as is commonly known, pioneered what was then regarded as a novel approach to training for public service.

The curriculum combined courses in theory with courses that took students into government agencies to work and conduct research; the faculty included academics from various disciplines as well as practitioners from var-

ious levels of government; public service programs included an academic publishing program as well as workshops for government officials. This blend of the academic and the practical remains the distinguishing characteristic of the LBJ School and this highly effective approach to training for public service is today an accepted model for public affairs graduate programs across the country.

Mr. Speaker, Lyndon Baines Johnson, who died January 22, 1973, will be remembered not only as a great President and Member of Congress, but also as the greatest champion of accessible and affordable quality education for all. President Johnson truly understood the importance of leaving no child behind, and he didn't.

For all these reasons, Mr. Speaker, it is most appropriate that the House voted to rename the headquarters building of the Department of Education located at 400 Maryland Avenue Southwest in the District of Columbia as the "Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building."

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I pay tribute to President Johnson's leadership in the area of civil rights. In response to the civil rights movement, Johnson overcame southern resistance and achieved passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which effectively outlawed most forms of racial segregation. As he put down his pen, Johnson is alleged to have told an aide: "We have lost the South for a generation." In 1965, he achieved passage of a second civil rights bill, the Voting Rights Act, that outlawed discrimination in voting, thus allowing millions of southern blacks to vote for the first time.

In other actions on the civil rights front, Johnson nominated civil rights attorney Thurgood Marshall to the positions of Solicitor General and later Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, making him the first African American to serve in either capacity. After the murder of civil rights worker Viola Liuzzo, Johnson went on television to announce the arrest of four Ku Klux Klansmen implicated in her death. He angrily denounced the Klan as a "hooded society of bigots," and warned them to "return to a decent society before it's too late." He turned the themes of Christian redemption to push for civil rights, thereby mobilizing support from churches North and South.

On June 4, 1965 at the Howard University commencement address, he said that both the government and the nation needed to help achieve goals: . . . To shatter forever not only the barriers of law and public practice, but the walls which bound the condition of many by the color of his skin. To dissolve, as best we can, the antique enmities of the heart which diminish the holder, divide the great democracy, and do wrong—great wrong—to the children of God.

Lyndon Baines Johnson was a giant of a man and a towering figure in the history and life of our nation. We are not going to see his like again.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURGESS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE UNITED STATES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, as we take up the agenda of the new Congress in the 110th iteration, we should look to new issues which address the needs of the American people in this century, in this time.

When we look at what that new agenda should include, it should reflect the values and lifestyles and locations of Americans where they actually live today, and not the way that we think they lived 50 years ago.

When we look at the America of the 21st century, we see a country that has changed radically from an old vision of our Nation as one-third rural, one-third urban, and one-third suburban. If you hold that idea, you are about 40 years out of date. The new United States of the 21st century is a majority part suburban. In fact, in the last Presidential election, for the first time in our country's history, over half of all voters were living in suburban communities. When you ask these voters, "What do you think the Congress should work on to make sure that it is addressing key needs of your family and your community," they overwhelmingly put forward a list of priorities that have been consistent for the last decade and that is: action on public education, on health care, on conservation, and on economic growth.

Responding to these needs, in the last Congress we formed the Suburban Agenda Caucus to then develop a political program here in the Congress to address those needs; and in this Special Order that we are going to have tonight, we are going talk about the next chapter, the suburban agenda for 2007. By talking about what these key pieces of legislation are, we have gone beyond platitudes or general policy descriptions to describe actual pieces of legislation that should be adopted in this Congress addressing the education, health care, conservation, and economic needs of the American people.

The suburban agenda is presented here in its new 2007 form. It includes the Gang Elimination Act of 2007, legislation by Congressman Dave Reichert that would seek to identify the top three major international drug gangs in the United States that represent a threat to our country's security. In fact, if you added up all of the documented gang members in the United States, it would amount to the fifth-largest army on the earth and one that represents a clear and present danger to the safety and security of many kids throughout America.

□ 1820

I will just say that in my own congressional district the average gangland shooter in North Chicago or Waukegan, Illinois, is in the eighth grade;

and this legislation is critical to provide Federal backup to suburban law enforcement to take on the new threat of gangs moving into the suburbs.

A second piece of the Suburban Agenda is the Teacher and Student Safety Act, legislation by Congressman GEOFF DAVIS. This legislation seeks to make sure that every classroom in America is as safe as possibly can be maintained, using the judgment of full-time registered teachers who know their classrooms and their kids best.

Under this legislation, a full-time registered teacher would be allowed to search a book bag or a locker if they have any colorable suspicion that a weapon has come into the classroom.

In my own congressional district, in the Winnetka school system, and certainly we all remember the Columbine school attacks, we saw troubled kids bring weapons into the classroom with tragic results.

As a former teacher, I know that I knew my kids best; and, using that judgment, we can make sure that classrooms are safer in America.

One of the critical opportunities that we have in our country is improving health care, especially using new technology and expanding health insurance for Americans; and there we have the Health Insurance for Life Act by Representative CHARLIE DENT.

The Health Insurance for Life Act addresses a critical problem in America, which is that the average suburban family will have five different jobs over their life, and they may worry that in between jobs they would lose coverage or be dropped or develop a pre-existing condition which would interfere with the continuation of health care insurance for their family.

The Health Insurance for Life Act of 2007 simply says that for every American already in an insurance pool, who already enjoys COBRA health reinsurance rights for 18 months, that you can continue those, that insurance, for as long as you need to.

Almost every suburban family in America has a problem that they have heard about, either in their own family or in their neighborhood, regarding predators on-line, people that would be using, for example, the number one Web site on the planet, myspace.com, to reach out to kids and to attack them in a way that was simply alien or impossible in the previous century.

The Deleting On-Line Predators Act, which passed in last Congress by a vote of 400-15, says that our first line of defense are parents, moms and dads who know about this danger and are upgrading the protections of their kids on-line. For example, in the 21st century, how the computer should be really in the living room and not the bedroom, where parents can have routine and casual contact with their on-line habits of their kids; or that every 21st century parent should demand the rights of the passwords of their children to make sure that they know where their kids have been.

The Deleting On-Line Predators Act also says to schools and libraries that, as we upgrade protections for kids on-line in the home, that we also do them in public spaces to, consistently and across the board, deny opportunities to the estimated 50,000 sexual predators on-line who are on-line at any one time.

Congressman JIM GERLACH has also introduced another key piece of the Suburban Agenda. That is the Open Space and Farm Land Preservation Act to make sure that we improve the tax treatment and grant programs to preserve suburban open space, so that we do not enter a state of drift in which suburban open space disappears across the country, and we have an unending series of strip malls.

And the final piece of the Suburban Agenda for 2007 is the Senior Safety and Dignity Act by Representative GINNY BROWN-WAITE. That Act lays out a set of protections for seniors as America ages to make sure that their health care standards, especially in senior and life-long care, are maintained.

When we look at this all, there is one bill that stands above all others in the concern of suburban families, and that is how to pay for college to make sure that a child has a guaranteed road map into the middle class. And to talk about that legislation, let me yield to the author of that bill, my colleague from Illinois, Congresswoman JUDY BIGGERT.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Thank you so much, Mr. KIRK, for organizing this opportunity to discuss the Suburban Agenda. As a Member who represents part of Cook County, the most populous county in Illinois, DuPage County, the second most populous county in Illinois, and Will County, the fastest growing county in Illinois, I certainly share your strong interest in suburban issues.

So I am delighted to be able to talk a little about the 401(k) kids. I want to just take a few minutes to explain what I think is one of the most important issues facing my constituents and constituents all over, particularly in the suburbs, the rising cost of college education.

Other than buying a home, the cost of a college education is probably one of the first major expenses that families need to start saving for. The average cost of tuition at an in-state public school is now at least \$13,000; for an out-of-state public school, it is \$19,000; and an average tuition at a private school is \$28,000 and rising. These numbers have risen and continue to rise far faster than the rate of inflation.

Adding to this problem, let me put on my financial literacy hat just a little bit, is that personal savings rates in this country have dropped to a negative 1 percent, one of the lowest savings rates since the Great Depression. So what I fear here is we have a financial storm waiting to strike families across the country.

With students already carrying 45 percent more debt than they did 10 years ago, I simply don't think increasing loan amounts and reducing loan rates is enough. We have to provide more tools for parents and students to save for college. That is why we have introduced H.R. 87, the 401 Kids Family Savings Act of 2007.

This legislation would put American children on the path to an affordable education and a firm financial future. It allows an individual, including a parent, a grandparent, an aunt or an uncle, to set aside a total of \$2,000 annually in 401 Kids Savings Accounts for each child.

Like that Roth IRA, the money is contributed to the account after taxes, but interest accumulates tax free, and the balance can be used tax free for the approved purposes in the bill. In the case of 401 Kids Savings Accounts, the money could be withdrawn tax free, first of all, for the college education.

The legislation would extend through 2015, the Coverdell Education Savings Account tax benefits, and rename these accounts 401 Kids Savings Accounts.

Second, for housing. 401 Kids Savings Accounts also can be used when the child grows up and they haven't used the amount, all of the amount, for the purchase of a first home.

And third, retirement. When the child grows up, he can roll over his 401 Kids Savings Account into a Roth IRA for use much later during retirement.

By enacting these reforms, we really can supply families with a single vehicle to set aside money for their children's futures. Money contributed at birth could grow tax free for 18 years until needed for college.

Parents and relatives also would have the peace of mind of knowing that if the child chooses not to go to college, even though they put away the money, or chooses a more affordable school, any money left over in the accounts can be used for the child's first home or retirement.

I would be remiss, as we talk about financial literacy and talk about savings, if I didn't mention that even Chairman Bernanke of the Federal Reserve has said that creating savings accounts for children at the time they are born is a great idea. So I am really pleased to be with you.

Mr. KIRK. If the gentlelady will yield.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I yield.

Mr. KIRK. When we look at this problem, we see that the Congress has taken critical action in the past to change our culture in favor of more savings and investment. The 401(k) program was relatively new to our society and our culture.

□ 1830

And yet millions of Americans now, when they get their first real job, establish a 401(k) program, saving on their own for retirement.

Last Congress you were leading the effort on behalf of extending 529 college

savings accounts that are chartered under each State. We already have \$80 billion saved under investment. That is why I want to applaud you with the potential that this 401 Kids account bill could do.

I yield back to the gentlewoman.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Thank you. Yes, there are several States that have started this process, too. The more that we can entice people to start that saving, to know what is available, the more that it is publicized, whether it is a State account or a Federal account, it is very important that this starts.

I know that in all the work that we do in the financial literacy and financial education that still we have kids that don't understand the difference between checks, cash or credit cards. Nor do people understand compound interest. Adults don't understand that.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, that may be the biggest benefit from this legislation. Not only will we save tens of billions of dollars for college education, and I think everybody in this Chamber knows George Washington University just crossed the \$50,000 a year tuition mark for kids, but more importantly, these accounts are going to have the names of each child on them. And so it is an education tool for parents. And I don't know if you want to talk about that. When the statement comes into the home that for a young teenage son or daughter, you might be able to talk about how the investment has gone.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Not even a teenager, but let's say a pre-teen, when the statement comes in and they look at it every month, they see how much interest, what interest means and what compound interest means, that they are getting more money every month, every year on this account. It isn't just sitting there static.

We have so many people in this country that are what we call "unbanked," that don't even have a bank account or anything. They don't get these statements. So this is a tool, you are right, that kids learn about how to manage money. And part of that is having the opportunity that will be gained, being able to go to college because they had their parents and their family that put money aside for them. And you could put aside \$2,000 a year, but you can start with \$50, \$100. Maybe families can't afford to put that much money in, but every dollar saved is a dollar towards education with the interest that is gained and reaped over the years in this account.

Mr. KIRK. I thank the gentlewoman. I think the Congress needs to pass the 401 Kids Family Savings Account Act. We know that the average college graduate in America earns a million dollars more than someone who only graduated from high school.

One of the other members of the Suburban Agenda Caucus and an author of one of the key pieces of legislation is my colleague from Pennsylvania, Congressman CHARLIE DENT, and I yield to him.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I want to especially thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) for his strong leadership on this suburban agenda. I also want to thank him, too, for arranging this opportunity for members of the Suburban Agenda Caucus to come to the floor this evening to discuss issues that are important to all Americans and not simply just people who live in the suburbs.

Every congressman or woman has a unique district with distinct interests, but we can all support an agenda that defends our children's safety, improves educational opportunities and expands access to affordable health care.

When I am at home in my district, one of the issues that I discuss with my constituents is our mutual concern for the safety of our children, both in school and on the Internet. Parents have a right to send their children to safe, drug-free schools, and we took an important step last Congress when the House passed legislation, the Student and Teacher Safety Act, that would allow States and school districts to conduct reasonable searches to ensure that our schools remain free of all weapons, dangerous materials and illegal narcotics. Parents need to know that their children are safe when they are at school.

As a father of three young children, I am particularly concerned about the threat of online predators. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reports that over 50,000 predators are online at any given time and one in five children has received an unwanted online solicitation of a sexual nature. We need to be vigilant as parents by supervising our children while they are browsing the Web at home. We also must do all we can to protect our children when they are outside our supervision by preventing them from accessing social networking Web sites and chat rooms like MySpace.com at schools and in libraries unless they are under adult supervision. The Deleting Online Predators Act will give parents peace of mind by ensuring that a responsible adult is monitoring their children's Internet use at all times.

Parents in my district know that a college education will double their child's earning potential, as you just mentioned, but they worry about how they will afford to send their children to a higher education institution. It is critical that we help families start saving early to send their children to college. By passing H.R. 87 and permanently extending the 401 Kids Family Savings Accounts, or college savings accounts, parents will be able to put money aside to invest in their children's future. And I want to thank the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) for her strong leadership on this issue.

Finally, one meaningful step we can take to ensure that individuals and families maintain access to affordable health care is to provide greater portability of health care coverage. Most

Americans with private group health insurance are covered through an employer, coverage that is generally provided to active employees and their families. A change in an individual's work or family status can result in loss of coverage. Americans are changing jobs more than ever before, averaging nearly seven different careers over the course of their working lives.

In 1985, Congress enacted legislation we refer to as COBRA to give workers and their families who lose their health benefits the right to choose to continue coverage provided under their group health plan. Under COBRA, an employer with 20 or more employees must provide individuals and their families the option of continuing their coverage under the employer's group health insurance plan in the case of certain events such as a voluntary or involuntary job loss, reduction in the hours worked, transition between jobs, death, divorce and other life events. But in most circumstances, the coverage under COBRA is limited to 18 or 36 months. And because of this 18-month limitation, during a prolonged job search, individuals and families have to purchase expensive policies in order to maintain their quality of care or they take the risk of becoming uninsured. During times of transition, families need the certainty of knowing that they will not lose their health coverage.

Later this week I will be introducing a bill, the Health Insurance for Life Act, which will remove the 18- or 36-month limitation on COBRA coverage, giving employees the option to continue their health insurance coverage indefinitely. Knowing that they can rely on continued coverage will provide individuals and families with consistency and security as they face change and uncertainty in their lives. And I look forward to working with all of my colleagues to advance this important agenda that has been outlined by my friend and colleague, Representative KIRK of Illinois.

And, again, I do want to compliment you and applaud you on your leadership.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, we have seen that several hundred thousand Americans each year exercise their COBRA rights to continue health care insurance for their families after they are laid off or leave employment. But, each year, over 200,000 Americans will reach the end of their 18-month COBRA period and then be unable to continue their health care insurance. If they have a preexisting condition in their family, they could then be left out of a coverage pool later.

I think that is why it is so important that, at the discretion of the family, at their own cost, they can continue that health care insurance to have peace of mind.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. DENT. Yes. The gentleman is absolutely on point. The portability aspect of this legislation is absolutely

critical. When I served in my State legislature, in both the State house and the State senate, this was a common complaint I would hear from people who suffered a job loss and were at the end of their COBRA eligibility.

□ 1840

They were very frustrated, just for the reasons you identified, that there was a member of the family who had a particular illness and that they could not get coverage elsewhere. So COBRA was absolutely critical to them being able to provide for their families.

Remember, too, when you pay for COBRA insurance, you are basically paying the full premium. So the portability aspect and dealing with the pre-existing condition is absolutely I think one of the best selling points and the most salient points of this legislation.

Mr. KIRK. We also hear from job experts that in America generally it takes one month or \$10,000 to find a new job, on average, but many families will hit that 18-month limit before they find new employment.

Mr. DENT. That is absolutely true. And particularly I would also urge anybody watching us this evening to not only look at their COBRA options, and certainly endorse this legislation, but also be aware of the fact that we have programs in this country called SCHIP for children who are uninsured, that if their children need health insurance, they may be eligible for that.

When I was in my State legislature, we passed an Adult Basic Program providing a low-cost health insurance program for adults of working age who, for whatever reasons, were out of work.

So, again, the gentleman is on point, that when people are unemployed, there are options for them in health care in many States, either through SCHIP or, like my State, Adult Basic; and I would certainly encourage people to contact my office or even their State legislator's office to seek some assistance.

Mr. KIRK. I thank the gentleman.

For suburban families, health care issues are second only to safety and security and improvement of public education in their priority list. One of the key issues is access to care, especially at community health centers, and making sure we have enough doctors. No one knows this issue better than the author of the Family Health Care Accessibility Act, part of the Suburban Agenda, my colleague, Congressman TIM MURPHY.

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Illinois for yielding.

As you said, few things are as important as the health of our families.

A lot of times in this Congress we talk about issues of health care accessibility, and a lot of times that becomes a discussion of health insurance. But the bottom line is, for families, they want to know that when their child or they are sick, can they get to see a doctor that they can afford, or

even having their well-child visits or other checkups and how do they do that.

Health care issues, being a top priority for the Suburban Caucus, includes my legislation, the Family Health Care Accessibility Act, which is an updated version of a bill I introduced last year to ensure that every family has a neighborhood doctor. Regardless of their income, regardless of whether or not they have insurance, families will have health care.

We oftentimes hear it quoted here, and sometimes misquoted, that there are millions of Americans without health insurance, and indeed there are, and we do not want Americans to do without that health care. But, in fact, many of these folks are covered, perhaps through their employer; and, as the gentleman from Pennsylvania was describing, when they are between jobs and they have that gap there, that is something that Mr. DENT's bill would help cover them.

But there are some who are also covered by Medicare and Medicaid and don't know it. We need to work with them to make sure they are aware of that. The census data simply asks who is covered.

But the other issue becomes what about those Americans, 12, 13, 14 million or so, who do not have anything, and those are the ones we need to recognize that there are some things we can do, and we need to act now. It is not a matter really of concern about spending vast amounts of money, but we have a solution at hand, a simple solution, a direct solution, and one that we should embrace quickly to help these families.

Understand that health care costs for families in the United States are rising. From 2004 to 2005, the medical costs for a four-person household increased by over 9 percent, to \$12,200-plus. This is a growing burden on all families and often many look at this as they can't afford health care.

But, fortunately, there are community health centers out there. These are nonprofit, community supported health care facilities that provide affordable primary and preventative health care on a sliding fee scale so that every patient who walks through the door can receive access to health care services. This is low-cost, affordable quality.

So instead of a family saying that they look at a health insurance bill of several hundred dollars a month, that would not be the issue, because what they could spend was a small, small fraction of that on a sliding fee scale to help them cover a doctor's visit, a dentist's visit or something else.

In fact, community health centers provide this high-quality care to over 15 million families who are the low-income, underinsured and uninsured. They provide a medical home for these folks and save even 30 percent for those who are on Medicaid, which is about a \$17 billion annual savings to the American taxpayer.

Community health centers provide a wide array of health care, such as prenatal, dental, podiatry, mental health, substance abuse counseling, hearing screening, vision screening, discount prescription drugs, case management, smoking cessation, blood pressure monitoring, blood cholesterol monitoring, weight reduction programs, a wide array of programs that are available there. But the issue is, are there enough of these centers around and are there enough doctors to staff them?

About 70 percent of those who use these community health centers have incomes below or at the poverty level, but there are also many other families who find themselves in a situation where they are working but are not insured and they can go to these, recognizing they can hold their heads high, because they are getting good quality health care and they have a health care home.

For many folks, these are the only health care services available, and while the number of uninsured patients at community health centers is growing, the number of physicians available to them is decreasing. There is a critical shortage of physicians available at community health centers to meet the health care needs of the uninsured and underinsured.

The Journal of the American Medical Association reports a 13 percent vacancy rate for family physicians, a 9 percent vacancy rate for internists, a 20 percent vacancy rate for OB-GYNs, and over 20 percent for psychiatrists. So what can we do to get more doctors at the community health centers?

Well, interestingly enough, physicians and other specialists hired by community health centers are covered by the Federal Torts Claim Act for medical liability costs. However, those who want to volunteer are not covered. They would then have to get their own insurance.

We have heard it spoken many times in this Chamber and other places where the cost of medical liability insurance is so high that many doctors retire early, they limit their practice or they leave the States where those prices are so high, in the tens of thousands, many times over, dollars per year. For example, many OB-GYNs will stop delivering babies in order to reduce their costs. In Pennsylvania alone, there are about only 4 percent of physicians who are under the age of 35, and we are looking for more shortages in the future.

Well, community health centers have limited resources to meet the current needs of the uninsured and underinsured, but there are many physicians and psychologists and dentists and others who want to volunteer at community health centers, but the current laws are a barrier to them. So when they do approach community health centers and say they would like to offer some time every month, the centers oftentimes find themselves in a position of turning them down.

This bill simply does this: Whether you are working in a community health center or you want to give your time at no charge to help those in need, you can be covered under the Federal Tort Claims Act, something that this Congress has done for those who are employed by those centers.

Let's extend that to those who want to volunteer. There is then no cost to those centers to hire those folks, and it is very limited cost to provide that health insurance for them. So there is a huge savings.

But the main thing is we provide more coverage for families, families have more doctors that they can go to, we don't have these shortages, we don't have long lines at these centers, and people have a health care home.

It is such a simple task for Congress to pass this. This bill is one I hope my colleagues will help me in co-sponsoring and help support as it moves through the process. We simply cannot afford to continue to address health care by talking about health insurance only. That is an important part, but it isn't just financing this system. It is a matter of fixing this system in a compassionate, quality way. Community health care centers provide that, if we only open the door for more doctors and others to provide that care on a volunteer basis.

What could be more humanitarian, what could be more compassionate, than to remove this government barrier that stands in the way of people reaching out their hearts and providing this care at this very low cost?

I would hope that all of my colleagues would join me in co-sponsoring this bill and helping to move it through. But it is, as part of the Suburban Agenda, one where we recognize that working families have tremendous needs.

We have in this country, reaching out of compassion, have helped those with very little income through Medicaid. We have helped those who are veterans through the VA system. We have helped the elderly through Medicare. Let's also help those who are in different thresholds, in different categories, who cannot afford health care, and let's do this very low cost, perhaps even a cost offset plan, that can provide this care to them.

Mr. KIRK. Reclaiming my time, I applaud the gentleman. I am a co-sponsor of the Family Health Care Accessibility Act. It is part of the Suburban Agenda, so many Members are backing it.

But my understanding on this legislation is that several trial lawyer associations are against this legislation because they want to preserve the right to be able to sue any doctor volunteering in a community health center out of that ability, which then would mean that there is no doctor present or the community health center closes down.

□ 1850

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Well, what happens is, right now, those

doctors who are paid are covered under the Federal Torts Claim Act.

What happens, if they can't see the patient, it is one of those things that medical care delayed is medical care denied. What they end up doing is sometimes going to emergency rooms, where the cost is many times over, and hospitals by law have to provide that care. They cannot turn them away. Again, we are taking children and families who should be seeing their physician for primary care, their immunizations, their flus and colds and earaches, and seeing a physician at a health center, and to have legal barriers are something that does not make sense to any family, let alone suburban families.

Mr. KIRK. You are an expert on health care in this Congress. When we look at the delivery of health care, in a hospital emergency room, we have the most expensive setting to care for a family. Generally they have waited until a very late moment, and now we are in an acute emergency situation.

Had that family gone to a community health center early in the process, we would have dealt with the problem without the drama and without a potential catastrophic result, and at much lower cost to the public and the family. That is why this legislation is essential, because it expands these centers and expands care at this level instead of the very expensive place we do it now, in the hospital emergency room.

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Yes, indeed. Hospital emergency rooms should be for emergencies and traumas. Those who have flus and other illnesses can be seen by other doctors that don't overburden the emergency room at a very high cost.

Those, however, who do not have those illnesses yet, by a checkup with their doctor, adults and children alike, we can reduce costs because they can get to see the doctor early, or the nurse or the nurse practitioner or the dentist.

Our focus should be on providing quality care, accessible care at low cost. Community health centers are a tremendous asset for our Nation and something that we should all be supporting. It is perhaps the most compassionate thing we can be doing for the underinsured and the uninsured.

We will continue the battles in other areas, and we will continue to work to provide all the care that families need. But this is such an important answer that is in communities now and something I think we need to pass now.

Mr. KIRK. If we don't pass this legislation, we will have fewer doctors and fewer examining rooms open in community health centers.

Ironically, because we did not provide this liability protection for community health centers, we don't have any issue of malpractice because there was no practice of medicine whatsoever in that setting which I think defies common sense. A greater access to care

and expanded capabilities for community health centers ought to be what this Congress is about.

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. I thank the gentleman for pointing that out. I am not clear whether there are any associations that oppose this part; maybe there are. But I would hope that they would reach out and say, these doctors are covered by some liability insurance. It is a lower cost to them. But the main thing is, let's get these families and these children to see doctors now and get the care that they need.

Mr. KIRK. I thank the gentleman.

When we look at the suburban agenda, you can see, last year, we had quite a lot of progress made.

The School Safety Acquiring Excellence Act not only passed this House as part of the suburban agenda, but it was enacted into law, allowing full national criminal background checks for anyone coming in contact with kids in a school, especially recognizing the Jessica Lunsford problem.

We also passed the Charitable Donations for Open Space Act, enacted into law, and that was with the leadership of my colleague from Pennsylvania, JIM GERLACH, who is now, as part of this year's suburban agenda, is moving the Open Space and Farmland Preservation Act, and I yield to my colleague from Pennsylvania.

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my gratitude to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) for his terrific leadership in pulling us together for this terrific suburban agenda that we have been putting forward in Congress now for the last couple of years.

We made progress in the 109th Congress, but we want to see a lot more happen here in this 110th Congress. It is through this caucus that we have where I think we are bringing vital issues to improve the quality of life for our constituents across this country to the forefront of the national debate.

In the 109th Congress, we made great progress on considering measures to benefit all Americans; and in particular, addressing the challenges facing working families in fast-growing suburban areas.

In my congressional district, which is in the suburbs and exurbs of Philadelphia, tremendous growth is leading to the dramatic loss of prime open space and farmland. This pressure has led the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, many counties, and even local municipalities to enact laws to protect farmland from development through the purchase of conservation easements.

These voluntary efforts allow farmers to stay on their land and preserve it for future generations, as well as improve the quality of life environmentally in our local communities.

To promote and encourage the efforts of municipalities and private entities that wish to participate in that effort, we have introduced H.R. 1152, which is the Open Space and Farmland Preservation Act. This bill, which is virtually

identical to H.R. 5313, which was agreed to unanimously by the House in the 109th Congress, is designed to promote the protection of the most threatened farmland and open space, land that a State, county, municipality or even a private entity, have all agreed is worthy of preservation.

To do so, the bill reserves a small portion of the current Federal Farmland Protection Program to provide matching Federal dollars for preservation efforts that are already receiving a county, State and local or private dollar in preservation effort.

The bill creates a challenge grant that encourages States and counties and local municipalities or those private entities, such as local conservancies, to work together to obtain a Federal 25 percent match.

I believe this bill will go a long way towards using existing Federal dollars to encourage more States, counties, municipalities and private groups to take action to protect their vital open space and farmland.

It is important to note that the bill is also fiscally responsible. And in that, it does not authorize any new spending; it simply reserves a portion of existing program dollars. It is my hope that if this new program is enacted, it will lead to better and more effective Federal efforts to help our local municipalities, counties and States to preserve farmland and open space.

I hope the Democrat majority here in the House truly understands the challenges facing suburban communities, and realizes that enacting the suburban agenda legislation is vital to our communities.

Again, I want to express my thanks to Mr. KIRK for his great efforts and his staff to pull together this very important Suburban Agenda Caucus again in the 110th Congress, and I am glad we are focusing more attention on issues that will benefit families in suburban areas and remain hopeful that we can build on our success from the last session and have great achievement again this session.

Mr. KIRK. We look back on the tradition of great environmentalists, like Theodore Roosevelt, who started the National Park Service and expanded key habitats like Yellowstone National Park, and we are all for strengthening and expanding the park system out west.

But for my constituents outside the Chicago suburbs, or yours in the Philadelphia suburbs, that might be only part of a summer vacation.

We need to pass this legislation so there is green and open space near home so we don't have an unending set of suburban sprawl, but we don't have the Federal Government take over this role; this is a decision made by landowners and communities throughout our local areas making local decisions. But in some, create more green and open space, new greenways, to preserve a quality of life and an ecological ambience that has become part of suburban living.

Mr. GERLACH. Absolutely. We have seen a lot of growth in southeastern Pennsylvania in the last 20 years, and it is good-paying jobs and family-sustaining jobs. As that continues to happen, people at the same time, while that is where they go to work and earn their livelihood, they also want to see the environmental quality of life also preserved, so they have in their communities not only the good-paying jobs but also the green space, the open space to preserve for their generation and beyond.

At the same time, that growth is also coming up against the rural communities, those communities that for generations and hundreds and hundreds of years have been agrarian. They were founded on agricultural activity, and now, as that growth pushes up against that, the farmers want to be able to stay and keep the family farm going for future generations.

We found in Pennsylvania that the Farmland Preservation Program is an excellent way to do two things: keep the family farm going by providing, through payment of dollars for conservation easements to the families, the ability for them to sustain themselves economically and, at the same time, sustain that environmental quality of life that is important to what makes a good community.

We have been very successful using county dollars, some local dollars, some very important State dollars, and even Federal dollars to have that effort go forward. But there still needs to be encouragement for local municipalities to participate in that process. That is what this legislation is about and why it is important for us federally to look at the issue.

Mr. KIRK. Why I think this legislation is so important, too, is we have seen in the development of the environmental law and movement a trend away from our roots protecting green and open space and habitat to more regulation, more lawsuits and potentially ineffective policies.

I will just note, the Federal Superfund program, designated to cleaning up the most toxic places in America, has spent over half its funds on litigation and lawsuit costs, not on environmental cleanup.

Your legislation takes us back to the original core of what the environmental movement was first founded to do, which was to protect green and open space and key habitats for all time.

□ 1900

Mr. GERLACH. Again, I thank the gentleman, because really this effort is about really allowing it to be locally based, based on two very important factors.

Number one, it is voluntary. No one forces a farmer to participate in the program. It is not like an eminent domain action where a taking of land occurs and that farmer or that landowner is paid just compensation for the fair

market value of the land, with or without his approval. No farmer enters into a land preservation program or transaction without his approval, in that he volunteers for it.

It does recognize very important private property rights, that everyone is entitled to realize the economic value of his land, and so what this program tries to do is pay the economic value of that land to the farm owner who wishes to participate on a voluntary basis. So it is locally oriented, and it is oriented to those that want to participate on a voluntary basis, realizing the economic value of their land based upon the conservation easement they are giving up. That, to me, is the best way to preserve local and environmental conditions, local folks making local decisions on a voluntary basis and having the financial resources to make those good decisions.

Mr. KIRK. It also seems to me we are not empowering a large bureaucracy. There is no overhead in administration. The vast percentage of resources dedicated for this purpose actually goes to the environmental preservation.

Mr. GERLACH. Absolutely. We have in our local counties county preservation boards that administer the program. They obtain dollars, both locally as well as from the State, and, where appropriate, the Federal Government, and they administer that program.

This legislation that is on our agenda does not add to bureaucracy. It will not add another person at the Federal level or the State level, does not add to our county preservation board staff-wise.

So it is just additional resources on a voluntary basis that would be available to those that realize that the quality of life in a community is based not only on economics but also the environmental aspects of that community, and that is why it is an important initiative.

Mr. KIRK. I thank the gentleman for being a leading part of our Suburban Agenda Caucus and moving this critical environmental piece of legislation.

To recap, last year when we put this together, we passed legislation, enacted it, for safer schools, charitable space, for open space. We led the way in at least the House passing legislation promoting fully electronic medical records by passing the Deleting On-Line Predators Act, setting the example on student and teacher safety.

This suburban trend in America is not an Eastern trend, and it is not a Midwestern trend. It is not a Western. It is throughout the country. One of our suburban leaders is from Texas, my colleague from the Texas delegation, Pete Sessions, and a leader on suburban issues.

Mr. SESSIONS. I appreciate the gentleman yielding me the time.

Being from Dallas, Texas, does offer me the opportunity to come in and join the Suburban Caucus members here tonight from Illinois and Pennsylvania; and tonight I would like to speak about

something that I think is very, very important and that is our economy.

Just yesterday, there was a brand new study that was released in Europe that mostly you will see in Europe, you probably will not see in the United States, but talks about how the United States economy, as it was 20 years ago, is now the size, or said another way, Europe is now the size of, their economy, in 2007, what the United States economy was 20 years ago. It comes as a shock to many people in Europe, even though they have already seen incrementally where their countries fall out.

But what has happened in Europe is they have seen a continuation of high taxes, of overregulation, of requirements on single payer or what we might call single payer system in health care, as well as rules and regulations that are given to unions to not only organize but to put additional restrictions upon employers.

So, tonight, what I would like to say is, thank goodness we live in America. Thank goodness we live in an America where the free enterprise system is alive and well.

Tonight, the Suburban Agenda that is being talked about by the Republican party is a part of trying to make sure that we grow our economy, to where America has the very best not only economy in the world but also a leading-edge and moving-forward economy.

What I would like to talk about tonight is also a part of our Suburban Agenda of growing the economy, and that relates to making sure that we have the opportunity to have lower tax rates that allow investment in opportunity.

As we know, in just a few short years, I think it is about some 1,381 days from now, the tax cuts that were passed by the Republican majority over the past few years will be going away unless the Democrats were to allow a vote and we reauthorize those. What would be gone away is the marriage penalty, depreciation, capital gains; and our tax rates would rise, also.

Mr. KIRK. You are telling me that the marriage penalty will be reimposed by the American Tax Code unless this Congress acts?

Mr. SESSIONS. That is exactly right. What happened was, when Republicans came into office 12 years ago, we talked about how important it was to make sure that every worker in a family, in this case a husband or a wife, would have an opportunity to only be taxed upon their own income. What happened is, after 40 years of Democrat control, we had taxes at this high, high level, and what happened is that a married person would be taxed at the highest rate of the person in that household, whoever made the most money. That meant that if a wife worked full time and a husband worked part time, he would be taxed at her high tax rate.

So what Republicans did with President Bush is we came and passed some-

thing that was known as the marriage penalty, and that is that every single person would be taxed only at their own rate, based upon what their own earnings were.

Mr. KIRK. What we did is we made sure married couples did not pay a higher tax than two single people living together.

Mr. SESSIONS. That is exactly right.

Once again, said another way, a person would be taxed only at their own income, as opposed to combining that rate, which then would increase the amount of taxes that a person would pay.

What I am telling the gentleman is that in around 1,300 days, if the Democrat majority does not reextend these tax cuts, that all four of these taxes and more that I have talked about will go back to the rate that they were before the Republicans lowered those taxes.

Mr. KIRK. If we look at the suburban agenda about safe schools, extending health care, green and open space, et cetera, one of the things that is not part of the Suburban Agenda is a tax increase, especially a tax increase on working families.

One of the things that we have instituted as part of our general tax policy is to make sure that married families are not paying a higher tax, because a key part of the Suburban Agenda is a family together, raising kids under one household.

I am worried, though, that if there is inaction on tax policy by this Congress, many of the inequities in the Tax Code get reimposed and we start taxing families at a higher rate than people who are single.

Mr. SESSIONS. That is exactly correct. The gentleman from Illinois is correct, that as a result of what Republicans have done, by cutting taxes, is that we have not only given people back more of their own money, we have allowed for America to be in a position to where we are more competitive with the world.

Is it not interesting that just a few short years ago all the talk was about outsourcing and these jobs that were going to other countries. Ever since we passed these tax cuts, the debate and discussion now is how do we get enough workers to do the work that we need done here in America.

The greatest threat against that would be that we do not have enough work that can be done here, and so companies go offshore to have work done on behalf of corporations and people here in this country.

Mr. KIRK. We talk about the Suburban Agenda, what is in it, which is pro-school, pro-health care, pro-environment legislation, and what is not, which is a tax increase on the American people. There is the argument that is made very often here in Washington that the only way to cure our financial woes is a tax increase. But if I remember, looking back at the record of the 1970s, even when Congress did

raise taxes, for every dollar in taxes that it raised against the American people, it spent another \$1.08 in new spending. So the record of those years was that, even though we were raising taxes, spending here in the Congress went up even faster, and so our deficit woes became worse.

□ 1910

Mr. SESSIONS. That is exactly the point. The political debate in Washington has been that Republicans cut taxes and deficits go up. Well, the fact of the matter is, since 2001, exactly on 9/11/01, when we had a balanced budget at that point, we have seen the deficit go up, and that is because we lost 1 million jobs on or about that day in the months forward.

So what Republicans did is they said, we have got to spur our economy. We have got to do the things that will bring America back to work.

I am pleased to tell you that the budget is virtually balanced and is expected to be balanced by next year as a result of a strong, strong economy. Just 1½ years ago, we had a deficit of about \$500 billion. This year, it is down to \$140 billion. That comes from strong economic growth. That comes from the opportunity for people to go to work. That comes from investment and opportunity, but, most of all, we are competitive with the world, and these are the things that Republicans talk about that is a part of the Suburban Agenda but that is good for everybody.

Mr. KIRK. If I am not mistaken, last year was the largest increase in tax receipts coming into our Treasury, even though there was no tax increase by the Federal Government, simply because of economic growth, that since September 11, 2001, we have added over 2 million jobs. Maybe that is one of the key lessons of the Suburban Agenda: There is no Federal program or no social welfare act that is more powerful in improving the life of a suburban family than a job and a growing economy for small business.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentleman is correct, and if I could have the gentleman also continue to keep focusing on how we have done this, what has been done is we have turned to the free market, the free enterprise system, to Americans, and said, we need you to go work as hard as you can work and bring this country back. That is exactly what has happened. It was not because of a government program.

What we did is, we gave people back more of their own money, allowed them to invest that money in places like Dallas, Texas, where I live, Chicago, Illinois. And we have this robust economy that, since 2001, 5 million new jobs have been added. Tax receipts are up, 3 years ago, plus 8 percent over the year before; then plus 13 percent in this last year, plus 15 percent more than we had received the year before.

We have more people at work today. More people own their own homes. There is more money being made, and

the government has more money at its disposal. I hope and believe that next year this budget is going to be balanced.

Mr. KIRK. As the gentleman points out, many people here in Washington will point to the European Union as the economic model, an example that we should follow, but the record is relentlessly negative towards their example of creating new jobs or economic growth, where we have seen a reactive decline of the European Union as against China and the United States. We also recall in the last decade how we all thought that we would all end up working for the Japanese and that Japan, Incorporated, was the big threat.

Now we see an old axiom of politics said by one great politician, never bet against the United States, and also never bet against freedom. What we have seen here is an unbelievable economic performance by our country, record tax receipts coming into the Treasury without a tax increase, and the ability then to focus on the future of the United States, which is largely being written in the suburbs, with safe schools, extending health care and making sure that we are planning for the long term in what will be aging America, with the baby boomers entering retirement, but hopefully, with these policies entering retirement with some safety and security based on private savings and investment, encourage through first the 401(k) program and then we hope through the 401 Kids Family Tax Savings Accounts.

Mr. SESSIONS. As we close down our time here with Republicans being on the floor, I would like to remind the gentleman of something that is heard over and over and over again, and that is how great America is. But I would like to ask a rhetorical question. Have you ever heard of the China dream, the Brazilian dream, the French dream, the German dream? Probably not, but every single person in the United States and billions around the world have heard of the American dream, and the American dream is tied directly to not only the dream that they have about themselves, but a dream about their future.

This is where Republicans, working together on the suburban caucus, making sure we have a healthy and strong economy, where investment and opportunity and reduction in taxes happens directly in front of us, and then we can support this agenda that is so important for every one of us.

Mr. KIRK. I thank my colleague. I will close out by simply saying that we now present to the American people and the Congress the suburban agenda for 2007, Action Against International Drug Gangs, moving into the suburbs where the Federal Government can help; Safe Schools, relying on the judgment of teachers, full time, using all of their abilities; 401 Kids Tax Deferred Savings Accounts, to make sure that families have more resources, more

flexibility, to save for their child's college education and first time home purchase. Health Insurance for Life, to make sure that we continue the COBRA insurance for Americans, for more than 18 months, the Deleting Online Predators Act to make sure we are empowering parents to control this 21st Century danger to their children; the Open Space and Farm Land Preservation Act to make sure that we have more preserved green and open space in the green and open suburbs, and finally, the Senior Safety and Dignity Act to make sure that as the baby boomers age, we are preserving our long-term health care for our Americans.

This is the suburban agenda, a vision for the future and a work plan for the Congress. We are looking forward to working with both sides of the aisle on this to make sure that we are representing and advancing the needs of America as it actually is, living in the suburbs and needing action on all of these items to realize the full potential of this Congress and the work ahead.

WALTER REED MEDICAL CENTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MATHESON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to stand in the well of the House tonight and address conditions at Walter Reed Medical Center, as well as other military medical hospitals, and I would also like to, in doing this, talk about why our soldiers and our veterans are so important to us.

I want to start by saying if we are truly concerned, if we are truly concerned about national security, then we have to be concerned about those who secure national security. We have got to be concerned about our soldiers. We have to be concerned about our veterans. Because, in fact, they make it possible for us to have these liberties that we have come to know and to love.

Tonight, as I start this explanation, I would like to first use the words of another, Major General John H. Bailey II, and I want to bring his words to our attention, because he has written an ode that really explains why the American soldier, the American veteran, is so important to this Nation and to the well-being of this country. His ode is styled from Boston to Baghdad, and his words capture the essence, the spirit of what the American soldier is all about, what the American soldier has done for this great country.

His words are:

I am the American veteran. I was born in battle on April 19, 1775. I am the total sum of my country's ethnic and cultural diversity. I am loyal, dependable and patriotic. My motto is, "Duty, Honor and Country," and my

battle cry is, "Don't Tread on Me." The tracks of my tears and the stains of my blood can be traced from Boston to Baghdad.

I was there at Lexington when the shot heard around the world was fired, saw the whites of their eyes, was battle-tested at Bunker Hill, Valley Forge and Yorktown, and won my country's independence.

□ 1920

I earned worldwide respect during the Spanish-American War while helping our friends in Cuba gain their independence. Names like Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders and the 9th and 10th Cavalry became household words. I saw action at San Juan Hill, Guantánamo Bay, and the Philippines. A young Lieutenant John Pershing was heard to have seen "white and black regiment fighters shoulder to shoulder unmindful of color in combat."

I was there at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, in the year of our Lord 1918. I was crowned in glory at the conclusion of World War II, the war to end all wars and the birth of Veterans' Day.

During World War II, in response to the attack on Pearl Harbor, the pearl of the Pacific, I rallied a nation, shouldered the weight of the world, defeating the Axis powers, preserving democracy around the world and preventing the annihilation of a race of people who called Germany home. In this country, we call these exceptional citizens Jewish people, and we know them as the Jewish community.

No words can better describe the effects of our entry into World War II than those of Admiral Hirohito when told by an aide, "Sir, we have scored a great victory," and he replied, "I'm afraid we have awakened a sleeping giant."

Thank you, World War II veterans. You are the greatest generation. Never before have so few given so much for so many.

In support of our friends in South Korea, I saw action at Bloody Ridge, Pork Chop Hill and Heartbreak Ridge, while introducing the helicopter and jet aircraft as battlefield tactics, actions which changed the course of military history.

I went to Vietnam to help the people of South Vietnam maintain the right to choose their own destiny. There I fought at Hue Dong Hai and Hamburger Hill. I refused to fall at the hands of a well-equipped and determined enemy during the 1968 Tet Offensive.

During Desert Storm, I engaged Saddam Hussein in his mother of all battles. I destroyed his will to resist.

And then there was 9/11, a day which must never be forgotten, a day which must never be repeated. It tested the soul of our Nation in a way not witnessed since December 7, 1941. And due to the atmosphere it created, I was again sent to Iraq as a part of the global war on terror. I am still there today

participating in peacekeeping and nation building. My rewards are found in the eyes of children and old people who now have hope.

I am the American veteran. I am from New York City, the countryside of Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. I've come from sea to shining sea. As a participating citizen, I shall continue to fulfill my forefathers' dreams of a more perfect union and open my arms and say to the world, send me your tired, your huddled masses, because I know it is that diversity that makes us who we are.

In closing, he adds, I leave you with the words of a young John F. Kennedy in his inaugural address, who said, "We will bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty." This pretty much describes the spirit of the American soldier and the American veteran.

Mr. Speaker, I share these words because it is important for us to understand the sacrifices not only made by this generation of veterans but the sacrifices made by veterans since the country was founded, since the genesis of this country, if you will. And because our veterans have been so important to us, because they have been there for us, we must be there for them.

I regret to say, Mr. Speaker, that we have not been there for them when it comes to military hospitals and facilities and the delivery of health care through the military facilities. We have not been there because recent events have shown us, in transpicuously clear, empirical data, that hospitals are substandard, that some of the treatment received has not been delivered in the kind of fashion and manner that we would have those persons who have given us liberty and justice for all, those persons who have made real the ideals in the Constitution of the people, by the people, for the people, those persons who have given us this opportunity to stand here tonight, we have not made the delivery of health care services as effective and efficient as they should be.

So I am here tonight with a colleague, and we are going to talk about not only the problems at Walter Reed but the problems in health care delivery in military facilities, generally speaking; and we are going to also continue to be grateful for the service that our American veterans have rendered to make this country the great country that it is.

At this time, I will yield such time as she may consume to the honorable lady from the District of Columbia, a student of jurisprudence par excellence, I might add, one who is a part of the conscience of the Congress and certainly the conscience of Washington, D.C., who has fought for statehood and continues to fight for the American veteran. She speaks, and when she speaks, others listen. I am honored to share time with the honorable ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON.

Ms. NORTON. I thank you, Representative GREEN. I particularly thank you for opening up this special hour in a way that offers perspective, historical perspective about why the treatment of our soldiers and veterans mean so much to us.

What you have done is to take us through the highlights of their history, which is our history, so that I think we come to grips with why the urgency that has been revealed at Walter Reed and now increasingly at other veterans hospitals and military hospitals must be addressed right away.

Mr. GREEN, to my left there is a rendition of remarks among hundreds of thousands now sent to the Washington Post and to Members of Congress once the Walter Reed revelations came forward in the Washington Post. And what is important about the remarks to my left is the way that they summarize the systemic nature of this problem.

Yes, we are focusing on Walter Reed. It happens to be in my district. Would that we could fix the problems that have come to light by dealing with this one great hospital; and this is far and away the greatest military hospital in the United States, most would say in the country. It is where we send our most injured soldiers. If you have been very seriously injured, you go to Walter Reed. It is considered the crown jewel of military hospitals.

Why, then, are we hearing from Fort Campbell, Kentucky? In a moment I want to know about your district, Mr. GREEN, but why are we hearing from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, words that also put us to shame? And the words are right there for you to say. We are quoting the words that have come forward, this time to the Washington Post. There were yellow signs on the door stating, "Our barracks had asbestos." How would you feel if you came home from Iraq or Afghanistan to find that kind of sign on the barracks to which you had been committed after leaving the hospital?

Mr. GREEN made a point about in-hospital care. So far as we have been able to tell, at least in the military hospitals, a standard. You will have to speak to the veterans hospitals. But nobody doubts that there is no better place for our soldiers to be, particularly if you are seriously wounded, than Walter Reed Hospital.

□ 1930

But you get out of Walter Reed and you find the functional equivalent of what we learned about Fort Campbell, Kentucky. There may not be a sign on the door, but the signs were everywhere to see. They were there in the now notorious building 18 where the whole roof now has to be changed, the mold and the rats and the roaches. What those are signs are, are of neglect of these soldiers once they left the hospital.

But in a real sense, I think my good colleagues and brother will agree with

me that it is when you get out of the hospital that you may be most depressed. You may have lost an arm or a leg or an eye, or you have lost part of your mental capacity. Now you have to come to grips with the real world. It is in those barracks, barracks like those described at Fort Campbell that soldiers have lost their way because we have lost ours.

Or let's take Fort Irwin in California. Here I am quoting again the Washington Post, March 5 of this year:

"Most of us," writes this soldier, "have had to sign waivers where we understand that the housing we were in failed to meet government standards."

My colleague will, I think, agree with me that our soldiers expected to be in substandard tents in Iraq and Afghanistan but not in the United States of America after being wounded and being sent back home.

Even though we had hearings in the Government Reform Committee 2 years ago speaking to the outpatient care and were assured by some of the same brass that appeared before us at the Walter Reed Hospital hearing just a couple of days ago, we find, courtesy of the Washington Post no less, not a hearing, but a real exposé that things are as bad or worse than we expected.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Would the lady yield for just a moment?

Ms. NORTON. I would be pleased to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Thank you.

You have mentioned Walter Reed several times and conditions at other facilities as well. I have information from the Washington Post that I would like to share to substantiate much of what you have just said, and I think that it bears reading because I want to make sure that I quote the Washington Post accurately. This is from February 18, 2007:

"Behind the door of Army Specialist Jeremy Duncan's room, part of the wall is torn and hangs in the air, weighted down by"—what the gentlelady called to our attention just a moment ago—"black mold." Black mold weighing the door down to the extent that it is being pulled apart from the wall.

"When the wounded combat engineer," it goes on to read, "stands in his shower and looks up, he can see the bathtub on the floor above through a rotted hole."

Now, this is hardly what we would expect to find in a hospital.

Ms. NORTON. This is the outpatient housing, normally. Unless that says it's a hospital.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. This is at Walter Reed Hospital, itself.

Ms. NORTON. I do want to make that distinction. Walter Reed Hospital, the Washington Post, I believe, did not find conditions to be substandard and drew the contrast between the hospital and building 18. I don't think the hospital has been the source of the problem. But they have put these soldiers in aftercare kind of apartments, in facilities like building 18. Unnamed, by the

way. It could have been named after somebody. They said they are going to name it, give it some honorific name.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. If I may, I agree with the gentlelady. What I am saying, I suppose, is the Walter Reed complex; building 18 is a part of the hospital complex.

Ms. NORTON. The base, yes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. The point is that, on the facility that Walter Reed claims as a part of it, building 18, the infamous building 18, we have these substandard conditions. These conditions are conditions that we would hardly expect to find at a facility that is treating wounded persons, patients, persons who, quite frankly, can become ill because of the conditions that they have to exist in while they are recuperating from their war injuries. These are the kinds of conditions I think the Washington Post, and I thank the Washington Post for doing this, but I think that the Washington Post has done our country a great service by calling them to our attention.

I would also mention this, if I may, before I yield back. My heart was really torn when I saw persons giving their testimony at the various hearings that took place. I was very much hurt and had tears literally well in my eyes when I saw one of the family members testifying about how a relative was treated. And then to hear soldiers talk about what they had to go through, the enormous amount of red tape, before they could be served. These kinds of conditions in the hospital as well as the conditions that are a prelude to entry into the hospital make it very difficult for our soldiers to appreciate the promise that we made to them, the promise to provide for them if they provided for us. If they made it possible for us to be secure, we made a promise to them to provide for them. It was very heart-wrenching to see the kinds of conditions, to hear the kinds of conditions, if you will, talked about with reference to our soldiers.

I am hopeful that these conditions will change. They have got to change. And they have got to change right away. I know that the gentlelady has other conditions that she would like to talk about, and I have other charts that I will be sharing as well.

I will yield to the gentlelady.

Ms. NORTON. I thank the gentleman for those observations, indeed. Your notion that they have got to change and they have got to change now is where we ought to be focused. You spoke about the heart-wrenching testimony, by the way, testimonies under oath. Just like the brass was under oath, so was the wife. She left her home, gave up her job to come be with her husband, has been there for months, lost in the Never Never Land of, is he going to go out on disability? Will he be returned to his company? The man had been in the National Guard for 16 years, for goodness sake.

If you are not going to tell him one way or the other what he is going to

do, you're disrupting his life, you're disrupting his entire family's life, and time after time, that was the story we heard.

I want the gentleman to know, we had all the brass before us as well. You have never seen so much brass, the Secretary of the Army. We had the former commander at Walter Reed, Kevin Kiley, who has been now kicked upstairs. He is the U.S. Army surgeon general. It actually was on his watch that most of these problems emerged. We had the major general, George Weightman, who was recently fired. He had only been there 6 months, so he was the fall guy it looks like. We had the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. They all came. And, by the way, when they heard the testimony you just spoke of, they harbored their apologies to the families sitting in back of them. That's the least they could have done.

I do want you to know, I say to my good friend, that when it came time for me to ask questions, I focused on something I happened to know well, that Walter Reed in the middle of a war was put on the base realignment closing list. Think about this: Walter Reed is on the list of military installations to be closed in the middle of the war on terrorism and the Iraq war. We tried to keep that from happening.

Something very important has happened as a result of the testimony. I asked the generals, on second thought, don't you think it would have been best to postpone any notion that Walter Reed would be closed, because that sends a signal to staff, clinical staff, staff of all kinds, that if you value your careers, this is not the place to come?

□ 1940

And yet this is where you need the best personnel in the world. And to the man, each said, that should be rethought. And I want to say this evening to my good colleague and friend that I will be introducing tomorrow a quite unusual bill to repeal the decision to close Walter Reed in order to stabilize staff there, as a first step to say to Walter Reed: We hear you. At least we are not going to send the message to your best personnel, leave this place as soon as you can.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. And I would gladly support the gentlewoman's legislation.

I will tell you, I talked earlier about the shot heard around the world. When it was stated that Walter Reed would be closed, that was the shock heard around the world. I think that that, probably of all of the closures that were to take place and are to take place, I think that one probably penetrated to the very heart and core of what a military service for veterans is all about.

Ms. NORTON. If the gentleman will yield. The Army, of course, said what it was going to do was to rebuild this massive new hospital in Bethesda. The problem with that is that it is going to

take \$3 billion. The gentleman and I, who serve in this House, know good and well that this House is not going to put \$3 billion into bricks and mortar at a time when we have come to the floor to talk about neglect of soldiers and veterans.

So why leave it on the base closing list? Maybe it was a pipe dream that somebody had as long as they were doing BRAC last year. Now has come the time to revisit that decision, and I am very pleased to say to the gentleman that I have noted, reported in the press that Members in a position to turn around that decision, our good friend who is chair of the Defense Appropriation Committee, Mr. MURTHA; his ranking member, Mr. YOUNG; Mr. WAXMAN, chair of Government Reform, where these hearings were held; his ranking member, Mr. DAVIS; had all said, had all said in a bipartisan matter, it is not the time to close Walter Reed.

So here we are coming together at least with something to do now to stop the bleeding. Then, there are a number of other things we have to do, but that it seems to me is the minimum we can do. And there is a developing consensus; we hear the same things in the Senate today at their hearings: At least let's put, as we say in the law, an injunction on closing this hospital.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Absolutely. And the bipartisan support for this is manifesting itself. I have noticed that partisanship, while it still exists, partisanship is not hopefully going to stand in the way of taking care of our veterans.

It is my hope that, as we look at these conditions and we recognize what is happening to our veterans as a result of being in these horrendous conditions, to be quite candid, that we will put aside the partisanship and we will do what we need to do to rebuild, reconstruct Walter Reed.

You mentioned the closure of it at an inopportune time. Clearly, while we are in a war, when our military hospitals and centers are most needed, we should not, we should not close the crown jewel. That sends a bad signal to people around the world as well when they hear that what is considered to be our top military medical facility is going to close. So I am completely with the lady; I support what she proposes to do.

And I would also add this. We are about to spend in Baghdad to construct a facility there, which is beyond the reach of this country in the sense that most Americans will never use it, and we are going to spend millions, untold millions there because we have cost overruns. We just don't know what we are running into as we are doing this, it seems. And it would seem to me that we can direct some of these dollars, make sure these dollars are used prudently and judiciously. But there can be dollars spent here for our veterans who are returning home who are going to need the best medical attention that the world can provide.

And as further evidence, if I may, of what is happening at Walter Reed as the gentlewoman has explained in terms that are quite clear, in the infamous building 18, which is a part of the complex, a part of the complex. I have another quote here from the Washington Post, and this one speaks of life in building 18. It talks about how it is the bleakest homecoming for men and women whose government promised them, and we made a promise to our soldiers; we promised them, we committed to them that: If you go and defend the country, you go to war, put yourself in harm's way; if you will put yourself in harm's way and defend this country, we will take care of you when you return.

And this is from February 18, 2007. According to the Washington Post, this promise of good care in return for their sacrifices, they returned home to the bleakest home coming that the government could have provided given that this promise was made.

I am going to yield to another colleague who has joined us. But it also goes on to say that, and this is a quote: "I hate it," said a soldier, who stays in his room all day. "There are cockroaches." This is for our veterans. "Cockroaches. The elevator doesn't work. The garage door doesn't work. Sometimes there is no heat and no water." No heat and no water in a facility for our veterans.

I think it is appropriate to get a response from the gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. STEVE KAGEN, if he would care to add to this discussion.

Mr. KAGEN. Thank you very much for leading off and expressing the view of one brave American soldier.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. And if the gentleman would yield one moment, I might also add that the gentleman is a medical doctor and is imminently qualified to talk about issues of care for our soldiers.

Mr. KAGEN. Thank you very much. But what we are talking about is not bricks and mortar. The buildings didn't fail. The windows didn't fail. The furnace didn't fail. It was a failure of leadership and, really, a failure of this administration. It adds yet another failure to the long list of failures. After all, this current administration, would you not agree, has failed to secure our Nation, our borders, our ports. It has failed to strengthen our middle class. It has failed even to educate our children. But, most importantly, for all the brave Americans who have put themselves in harm's way, this administration has cut and run from them at their military hospital, the Army hospital at Walter Reed.

It is a disgrace. And it is not about bricks and mortars; it is about failed leadership, something that this Congress, the 110th Congress, can turn around and will as we already have.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. The gentleman makes an excellent point. Because ultimately people make decisions, and somewhere along the way,

conditions that merited attention were not dutifully attended to.

Ms. NORTON. Would the gentleman yield on that point, to reinforce that point? At the hearing earlier this week, the generals testified that this was not for want of funds. The fact is that we have given and will give more. If you come here and you look at our Defense budget, I don't think you will see that the Congress has been stingy in coming forward with the funds to do what is necessary, at least to keep these kind of shameful conditions from taking place. And the fact that you see top flight medical care at Walter Reed itself says that, when the doctors are in charge, when the nurses are in charge, things are fine.

The leadership that you speak of, the leadership to deploy the funds correctly, the leadership to make sure that our soldiers have a seamless recovery so that, when they are in aftercare, they know they are recovering because they are treated in exactly the same way they were treated in the hospital.

Yes, you are right, I say to my good friend and colleague who knows firsthand that whatever the doctor is able to do for you in the hospital can virtually evaporate if the kind of care that is necessary is not given after release from the hospital.

I would be glad to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. KAGEN. Every physician, every nurse, everyone on the floor at Walter Reed is doing their personal best to take care of the soldiers, and they are getting great care.

□ 1950

But the thing I find extremely upsetting, on the night of the State of the Union address, my wife, who is a nurse, was in town. She is president of the social organization for the spouse's club of the freshmen class, both Democrats and Republican; and she went to Walter Reed on a fact-finding tour to see that the soldiers were getting all the care and all the prosthetic devices that they required.

Well, they gave her the company tour. They didn't give her a tour of Building 18. And come to find out, according to testimony revealed, that Lieutenant General Kevin Kiley knew about these conditions as far back as 2003, when one soldier reported that the conditions were extremely poor and he wasn't getting what he needed.

So I have the opinion, as a physician, and having years of experience of caring for thousands of military veterans, that if they had our back covered during conflict, we must not let them down. We have got to cover their back when they come home.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. And I might add also, in terms of covering their backs when they come home, that these medical facilities, not just Walter Reed but others, are experiencing some concerns that we have to talk about as well, which can be a great

segue into this Washington Post comment from March 5 of 2007.

This one reads that "the mold, mice and rot of Walter Reed's Building 18 compose a familiar scenario of many soldiers back from Iraq or Afghanistan. Soldiers and veterans at other facilities report bureaucratic disarray similar to Walter Reed's indifferent, untrained staff, lost paperwork, medical appointments that drop from the computers, and long waits for consultations."

Now that kind of treatment is something that cannot continue. The bricks and mortar, we have to deal with, and I believe we can deal with that. But we also have to make sure that the computers work. We have got to make sure that persons have adequate staffing available to them at hospitals so that they can receive the kind of attention that they merit and deserve.

This problem is systemic, as the gentlelady explained, and I think that we have to take a systemic approach to dealing with it. If we only focus on Walter Reed, then I think we miss something important, an opportunity to look at the entirety of what we are confronting and to take corrective action, not for one circumstance but for all circumstances that we find ourselves confronting at this time.

Let's not let any aspect of this escape. While we are dealing with it, let's deal with it in its entirety.

And I would yield to the gentlelady.

Ms. NORTON. I appreciate that the gentleman has yielded, and the contrast he is drawing between the bureaucracy and the in-hospital care. Because when you see conditions like this, here are some more direct communications.

Now, to be fair, I want to stress, and the difference between the Washington Post and these communications is we have not verified these. We don't want to say in any way that we doubt them, but we do want to say what the difference is.

Nevertheless, people have felt they had to tell us what they felt and what they knew. And here you see, again, another part of the country, the other end of the country, Fort Irwin in California. "The room was swarming with fruit flies, trash overflowing and a syringe on the table."

Please remember, all that we are hearing about physical conditions is emblematic of an invisible bureaucracy that is much worse.

Or Fort Knox, again, in Kentucky. "The living conditions were the worst I had ever seen for soldiers, paint peeling, mold, windows that didn't work. I went to the hospital chaplain to get them to issue blankets and linens. There were no nurses."

Again, this one, however, these are from the Washington Post. But these they haven't verified, but they haven't gone out there.

I do want to say that when you talk to the soldiers, as I did, and here I will quote one of them. He said, "Congresswoman, these people need help." They

did not even criticize the workers in the bureaucracy. Their sense was that they were overwhelmed.

We are talking about an invisible bureaucracy, a bureaucracy, for example, that when you have lost an arm and a leg, maybe both of them, will keep you waiting months before you can find out whether you are going out on disability or whether you are going back in some form or fashion to the Army.

And the gentleman has talked about lost paperwork, computers that don't talk to one another. The life of one soldier can be on 27 different computers. The computers don't talk to one another. Therefore, nobody can talk to the soldier.

I have suggested that we have to go with this in long-term, short-term as well as long-term ways. One short-term way would be every soldier needs his own advocate, so that, while we are fixing it, you never feel you are lost. There is somebody you can always go to.

I would be glad to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. If I could, before you yield to the gentleman, let me just say this. We have had another person to join us, and I think it appropriate that we announce the presence of the subcommittee Chair on Oversight and Investigations, and I am confident that he will have much that he is going to share with us.

I just want the Members to know that he is with us tonight, and that would be the Honorable Harry Mitchell, who is from the great State of Arizona. And because he is the Chair of the subcommittee, I feel it my duty to yield to him at this time, after which we will continue. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MITCHELL. Thank you very much, and I appreciate that.

What has been discussed here are the conditions at these hospitals, other hospitals and the ones that you have mentioned over here; and it is absolutely unacceptable for any official to have had knowledge of the dilapidated conditions at Walter Reed, only to stay silent and do nothing. They must be held accountable.

This Congress went for years without conducting any oversight whatsoever. And the American people sent us here to do a job. The American people sent us here to get to the bottom of this. That means asking the tough questions and leaving no stone unturned to make sure that this never happens again.

The problems at Walter Reed cannot be fixed with new drywall and paint. Inadequate outpatient care and confusing, time-consuming bureaucracy can impact soldiers throughout their entire life. We owe it to our soldiers and veterans to understand how this systemic failure could increase their needs in the future.

One of the things we are finding out is that the problems in the military medical system extend far beyond dilapidated buildings. Too many soldiers are finding an endless stream of red

tape as they try and secure the benefits they have earned in the VA system.

One of the things that you have mentioned, that we are holding hearings on this, and tomorrow we are having a hearing on Walter Reed and how it impacts other veterans' facilities. We are holding these hearings to investigate this problem, and we are going to do something about it.

I think the people are sick and tired of seeing the way that our troops are being treated, and I really welcome this discussion and the discussions we are going to have with these investigations and oversight hearings.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for taking the time to come to the floor. Your leadership is invaluable on this type of concern. We want the country to know that you will be there for our veterans, and we are going to make sure that it is fixed. We have a short-term solution, but we have to also have a long-term vision, and I greatly appreciate your taking the time.

I yield back to the chairman.

Mr. MITCHELL. Can I add one other thing? And I think this is very important.

We just introduced this last week the Dignity for Wounded Warriors Act; and this is to look at the long-term effect, not just of what is happening right now.

The Dignity for Wounded Warriors Act of 2007, we introduced this to ensure that injured soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan receive the care they deserve. It sets the standard of care for our wounded. It sets the standard for military medical facilities, and it cuts through the red tape our wounded and their families have to navigate through.

So we are looking at not just now but, as you said, this is a long term, and I think we are going to address that with this Dignity for Wounded Warriors Act. I am very excited about that, and I think when you see this come to the floor this will have overwhelming support.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. I thank the chairman for his vision.

I would now yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. KAGEN.

Mr. KAGEN. Thank you very much, and thank you for being there to ask the tough questions.

What I think the American people have to understand is that there has been a positive change and a new direction in this country and in this 110th Congress. You are looking at two new Members of the Class of 2006. It is the class I call America's hope.

□ 2000

It is America's hope that we intend to represent.

But I think everyone watching tonight and everyone in America must really be asking themselves several questions: What are these people's values, and whose side are they on? Things have changed in the 110th. I think you

measure a person's or an administration's values based upon how they spend their money or our money, and this administration was seeking to cut \$3.8 billion from the health care of veterans. They were asking our veterans, who have put their lives on the line, to pay for the benefits they have already owned. Those are not the values of the people I represent in Wisconsin. I am sure they are not Arizona's values either.

And the other question: Whose side are we on? Well, the current administration is choosing to help the politically connected, private, inside contractors, not just in Iraq but here at home at Walter Reed, rather than the wounded who seek the best care possible. This administration, in my view, has chosen to help insurance companies and pharmaceutical companies rather than our hardworking families and the senior citizens that I take care of in Wisconsin who cannot afford their prescription medication. I don't believe the values of this administration reflect those of the American public, and that is why I think I got elected to this Congress, to bring a positive change. What you see at Walter Reed is a symptom of a bigger problem in the White House.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his observations.

And I think that we are very fortunate that your State of Wisconsin has sent you here with the vision that you have. And I believe that you are going to be a very valuable Member of this House. The contributions that you have already made have made a difference, and we thank you for your presence.

I will now yield again to the gentleman because I know that, given she is from the District of Columbia and Walter Reed is in her district, that she has some additional points to make.

Ms. NORTON. I appreciate the gentleman's yielding. And I also appreciate hearing the Wounded Soldiers Act. That looks like the thinking on that even predates some of what has been revealed here.

You will notice that the President has appointed a commission. It is a bipartisan commission. It has two chairs that I think everybody would respect, Donna Shalala and former leader Dole. We often have tried to get commissions, and I would applaud the appointment of a commission largely because a commission, as I understand its charge, will look throughout the country and not focus simply on the crown jewel and will look at the bureaucracy and not simply at the peeling walls.

But I want to stress again, these soldiers need relief now, people. If you go into Walter Reed and say, "Don't you worry, this bureaucracy, we are going to fix," I can tell you if you are going to fix a bureaucracy where the computers don't talk to one another, you are going to be fixing that for years to come.

We have got to be able to say, it seems to me, before we go on April 2 to spring break, this we have done. I anticipate you will see some of it in the Defense supplemental. Some of it will be money. Some of it will be language. I say that without even knowing, but I know how concerned the Congress is.

And I really want to bring the ultimate analogy here, and that is to say, remember Vietnam and the Vietnam veteran. How many Vietnam veterans are homeless today, feel the terrible neglect of that war? They were draftees, but the price they have paid. And, of course, these are volunteers, which, by the way, in a real sense means we really owe them because they have stepped forward on their own. But increasingly the Vietnam analogy is used, and that analogy has some validity. The part of it that we must see does not obtain is the part that relates to how the Vietnam veterans were treated. That must be the end of that. We must show with this war that there will never be a Vietnam when it comes to treatment of the wounded and treatment of veterans. And that day begins now. And we don't have a lot of time.

This is March. We have a few weeks before we go out. I think we can do it. We may not pass the supplemental before then, but it does seem to me that we are going to come forward when I hear all of the concern with short-term solutions so that the soldiers at Fort Irwin, at Fort Knox, at Walter Reed and in your respective districts can know that help is not only on the way, it is coming, it is galloping their way.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Absolutely. And such that they can see it immediately, if not sooner, because you really don't need a commission to kill roaches. You really don't need a commission to go over and take care of a mold problem. You don't need a commission to repair doors, to make sure that the water runs and that it is hot. You don't need a commission to do the little things that make a big difference in the life of a patient in a hospital.

So it would seem to me, and I commend the President for appointing the commission, that while commissions have their role, there are things that can be done immediately that they can see such that they will have confidence that the committee is going to do its work because right now there probably is a failure of confidence in what the commission may ultimately conclude because we live in a world where it is not enough for things to be right; they must also look right. And it doesn't look right to have a commission studying a problem when roaches are running across the floor. So we ought to get in there as quickly as possible and allow the people who can do these little things that make a big difference in a person's life, give them the opportunity to make some change, immediate change, that the patient can see.

I think that this infamous building 18 is one that can receive the kind of attention that these soldiers, these vet-

erans, will appreciate immediately. They shouldn't have to look through walls and see bathtubs above them. They shouldn't have to cope with the conditions of mold that can, in and of itself, become another problem for them. So I am hopeful that we will see some immediate change right away.

And I believe that the chairman is still with us, and I would like to have the chair give his response to what we are talking about with reference to immediate change.

Mr. MITCHELL. Absolutely. And I think that the changes that you mentioned are ones that can be done immediately. But this has been a problem that has been overlooked for so many years. And I believe, because I have heard from other people, that there are other buildings out there besides building 18. That is not the only one. I think this is just symbolic of a health care system that is not only part of the Department of Defense but also I think it probably, and this is what we need to look into, may spill over into veterans' care, the Veterans' Administration. What we need to do is to make sure that there is a seamless transition from those in the military to the Veterans' Administration. That is one of the things that we are looking into now to make sure that all of those tests and all of the applications that people went through and all the paperwork and red tape and bureaucracy they went through when they were at Walter Reed or any other military facility, they don't have to repeat it when they go on to the veterans' hospital. We don't want that to happen.

And it has been estimated that there is going to be over 700,000 veterans of the global war on terror. And when this is over, it is going to flood the VA system. And we have got to make sure that because we take care of these new veterans that we don't forget, as you have said, the older veterans, those from Vietnam, those from Korea, and the few that are still around from World War II and beyond. We have got to make sure that we have the resources available, not only people but money, to take care of the new veterans that are coming on, and we need to plan for that. And I think there has been a real lack of planning for what is going to happen with the huge number of soldiers that are coming here.

Recently it was reported that, in World War II, for every soldier that was killed, there were two wounded. Today, and I think this is important, when we try to measure what is going on in Iraq and we talk about the number of fatalities, for every fatality, there are 16 that are wounded.

□ 2010

This is going to put an extreme pressure on the military medical facility as well as the veterans. That is what we have got to be prepared for, and that is what we have to be looking for in terms of the future.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I know each speaker will have some

closing comments to make. If I may, I will start with the medical doctor, the first-term Congressperson who has already made a difference by being here and who has shared an infinite amount of intelligence with us.

I yield to the gentleman to please give closing comments so we can hear from the other speakers as well.

MR. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, during the past 12 years, our opposition party, during their power, during their control of Congress and our budget, the veterans budget for the VA health care system fell by 12.5 percent on a per person basis. This is at a time when they took us to war based on lies and deception, based ultimately on poor judgment, based on a time when there will be 263,000 of our Guardsmen and Army Reserve coming home and needing the care that they need.

This is not the time to reduce the veterans health care budget. This is a time for Democrats and Republicans across the aisle to work in a bipartisan way, to come together and move up our performance, not to deny that it exists at all.

This thing again from Walter Reed was a terrible, terrible blot on what otherwise would be a tremendous health care system, the veterans health care system.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we will hear from our chairman at this time.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, just one last thing. We looked at the conditions, the physical conditions of these facilities that have brought this to light. Maybe it is good that these problems are coming to light, so we can take a look at not only the military facilities, but also the veterans facilities.

But I think what we found is that the problems in the military medical system, and probably the veterans as well, go far beyond dilapidated facilities, and I think you are going to find as you talk to these soldiers and their families that one of the things that is important is that the endless stream of red tape and trying to secure benefits, this has been a strain, not only on these individual soldiers, but the whole family.

So one of the things we are looking at, and I think that is so important with the Dignity for Wounded Warriors Act, is we are not only taking a look at the standard of care and the medical facilities themselves, but also how important it is to look at the red tape.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlelady from the District of Columbia, who has been a real fighter for veterans in this Congress.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and let me thank him for his leadership on what I think has been a very informative special hour about our veterans.

Just to pick up on what my two colleagues have said, the chairman stresses that we are talking about veterans as well as military matters. The

best example at the hearings was the decision that the poor soldier has to make about whether to take his veterans benefits or his DOD benefits and how difficult that decision is, and how some of them are just driven crazy about how you arrive at that decision, since the amounts can be very different, the kind of decision where you need somebody holding your hand all the time.

My colleague talked about poor judgment from the beginning when we went to the invasion and now when we see soldiers coming back home. I indicated earlier that a colossal example of poor judgment was closing the premier military hospital in the middle of a war.

If I could just quote in closing from Vice Chair Cody, who testified before us at the Oversight and Reform Committee hearing: "You are trying to get the best people to come here to work, and they know in 3 years that this place will close down and they are not sure whether they will be afforded the opportunity to move to the new Walter Reed National Military Center. That causes some issues."

Well, as I have said, we are not going to give \$3 billion for bricks and mortar in the middle of a war anyway, so that is why I am introducing a bill tomorrow just to send the signal that we are not going to close this hospital.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for her vision as well.

Let me close by saying this to my colleagues and friends: we are not talking about what we call a Third World country when we talk about Walter Reed and the facilities. We are talking about the richest country in the world, a country where we can spend \$177 million per day on the war, and that was prior to January of this year. Now we spend over \$200 million, not per year, not per month, not per week, but per day on the war. A country where one out of every 110 persons is a millionaire.

In this, the richest country in the world, where our soldiers and our veterans have made it possible for us to have these riches, these liberties, I think that we have to provide better services for them before, during, and after any injury that they may receive.

So I am honored that we had the time tonight. I want to thank the Speaker for allowing us to have this time tonight.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressmen AL GREEN and FRANK PALLONE for arranging this Special Order hour. Today I rise to register my concern about the conditions at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and to show my support and dedication to increasing the quality of health care services, for our veterans as well as our men and women in uniform.

The Nation has been horrified by the Washington Post's recent reports of the appalling conditions at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Thanks to the diligent investigative reporting of Dana Priest and Anne Hull, we now know that our soldiers recovering in outpatient

units are being forced to confront cockroaches, mice droppings and toxic black mold as they heal. Even worse, many become lost in an uncaring military bureaucracy that subjects them to long waits just to get their most basic needs addressed.

The administration is now scrambling to control the damage from this scathing exposé of its neglect of our wounded warriors. Almost as distressing as the conditions at Walter Reed is the fact that it took a report from the Washington Post to get the administration to address this unacceptable situation. We now know that our wounded warriors have been complaining about these problems for years, not just at Walter Reed but at military hospitals and outpatient facilities across the country. Their pleas, however, seem to have fallen on deaf ears. We owe a debt of gratitude to the reporters and editors at the Washington Post for uncovering this abominable situation and forcing this administration to act.

Time and again, when those of us who oppose America's involvement in Iraq stand up and question why our brave men and women in uniform must fight and die in a war of choice, we are accused of "not supporting the troops." But, Madam Speaker, supporting the troops is about more than lip service. The hypocrisy and irony of the situation at Walter Reed is scandalous and immoral. The same administration that hides behind the troops to avoid changing its policy in Iraq is guilty of abandoning the very men and women who must make the sacrifices required to carry out this failed policy.

The sheer audacity of the administration's rhetoric in comparison with its actions is staggering. The administration trumpets its support for the troops but then, in the next moment, sends them into battle without the proper training and equipment. The administration says it supports the troops, but then falls short in providing them with a safe environment to heal the wounds they received while fighting so valiantly and selflessly for our country.

Thousands of our brave men and women serving the administration's failed policy in Iraq have paid a heavy price. Since March of 2003, 23,677 service members have been wounded in Iraq. Our military and VA health care systems are in crisis, apparently unprepared for the influx of casualties that war unavoidably creates. These health systems have been overwhelmed by troops returning from battle seeking health care and, in many instances, are unable to provide these men and women with the services they so desperately need. It is estimated that in the coming years over 700,000 veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will enter the military and veterans health care system. Yet, because of Republican budget cuts, many of our brave soldiers are returning home with mental health ailments to discover that they will receive a third fewer psychiatric visits than they would have just 10 years ago.

The number of soldiers navigating the bureaucracy of Walter Reed since 2001 has nearly doubled, yet the administration continues to move forward with the planned closing of the hospital. The president's budget continues to shortchange veterans' health care, providing an increase in fiscal year 2008 but then cutting the budget in fiscal years 2009 and 2010 to below the 2008 level and freezing the funding level thereafter. The administration's lack of planning for the war

seems to include a total disregard for the service members who are returning home bearing the scars of the conflict.

Mr. Speaker, our soldiers have done their duty. Now we must truly support them, not by blindly continuing a failed policy, but by getting them out of harm's way. We will continue to insist that our service members receive the health care they deserve. We will continue to hold oversight hearings about the conditions faced by our wounded service members and veterans at Walter Reed as well as at other military and veterans health facilities across the country. But the best way to support these brave young men and women is to begin a fully-funded withdrawal. Let's really support our troops by giving them the equipment and supplies they need to get out of Iraq safely in the next 6 months.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order earlier tonight.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOREN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

CONGRESSIONAL IMMIGRATION CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, welcome to the chair. I hope you enjoy your duration up there, as many years ago, it must have been 1995, I had the privilege of my first time in the chair. I hope you enjoy it as much, and I hope everybody at home is watching you in your day of glory.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Iowa.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding.

I feel compelled to respond to many of the remarks that have been made here on the floor about the condition of the health care treatment for our veterans. I won't deny that there were unacceptable conditions in Building 18. I don't believe there has been any empirical data or quantifiable information that says it has gone beyond some of the rooms within Building 18.

But I know when I go out to Walter Reed and when I go to Bethesda and when I go to Landstuhl and I look those people in the eye that are there every day with compassion fatigue that are giving their heart and soul and everything they have for the health care interests of our brave soldiers who have been wounded defending our freedom, a lot of that freedom and a lot of that mission have been opposed by the people on this side of the aisle, there is a strong commitment in all of those

hospitals by the personnel that are there. They work long hours, and they give the best service with everything that they have. And I will agree that there is a bureaucratic problem and we ought to find a way to put some software in place and put a system there so we can track patients and they don't get dropped from the system and they can be expedited through with the most efficient and high-quality care possible.

But this being an issue that is being stampeded and run up the flagpole goes beyond trying to fix the problem. It is an effort to try to undermine the mission of our soldiers overseas, and I think that is deplorable, Mr. Speaker.

So I stand with the people that serve America, those that put their lives on the line, those that have lost life and limb. I stand with the people who stand there and help them. And we need to be supportive and encouraging and fix the problems we have and remove the politics from this debate.

I yield back to the gentleman from California.

Mr. BILBRAY. I appreciate that, Mr. KING.

At this time it is my privilege as the new chairman of the Congressional Immigration Caucus to actually recognize Congressman NATHAN DEAL of the great State of Georgia, who actually has agreed to serve as the subcommittee chairman on the Immigration Caucus for Birthright Citizenship.

At this time I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Thank you, Mr. BILBRAY.

Mr. Speaker, as we approach this topic of dealing with the ever-increasing problem of illegal immigration in this country, it is certainly one with many facets. But the one that I would like to address briefly tonight is the issue that relates to birthright citizenship. Let me define it, first of all. It is the extension of citizenship to any child born on American soil, regardless of the legal status of the parents of that child.

The United States does just that. But we are in an ever-increasing minority in the world community. Currently, there are approximately 141 nations that do not grant birthright citizenship.

□ 2020

And there are only about 35 countries that do, the United States being one of those. In fact, every country in Europe no longer grants birthright citizenship. Ireland was the last of those countries, and in 2004 by popular vote, they no longer grant birthright citizenship. Israel doesn't, Japan doesn't, virtually every country on the face of the earth with the exception of the United States have recognized that the right of citizenship is indeed one of the most precious rights, and it should not be extended to those who have broken our law and who are illegally in our country.

Just as the overall immigration issue has many facets, so does the issue of birthright citizenship. First of all, there is the question of, how do you solve the problem? The real difficulty comes from the fact that the current interpretation is based on an interpretation of the language of the 14th amendment.

Many legal scholars believe that the intention of the 14th amendment, which had as its primary purpose to settle the issue of citizenship for individuals who were formerly slaves, has been perverted to extend it to birthright citizenship for anyone born on American soil. There are certainly legitimate arguments that can be made on both sides of the issue. But the one that I think focuses most clearly on whether or not it was the intention of the writers of the 14th amendment to include this issue is demonstrated in the language that comes out of the debates that surrounded the adoption of that amendment.

The reality is, though, that many of the court cases upon which people rely today to say that we automatically extend citizenship to anyone born on our soil regardless of the legal status of their parents, comes from a day and a time when the United States did not have immigration laws in place, did not have in place laws that distinguished between those who were legally in our country and those who were not. We, of course, now live in a day and a time when those laws are in place, albeit they are not very well enforced most of the time.

But what is the cost of this issue of birthright citizenship? I think there is a legitimate argument that can be made to say that birthright citizenship is one of those magnets that contributes to illegal immigration in the first place. Consider the latest statistics from the Center for Immigration Studies in which they say that there are approximately 383,000 children born every year to illegal immigrants. That is, about 42 percent of the births to all immigrants in this country are to illegal immigrants to this country, and that births to illegal immigrants now account for one out of every ten births in the United States. One out of every ten children born in this country is being born to someone, a parent, who had no legal right to be here.

What are the financial costs associated with it? We all know that illegal immigration in and of itself places huge financial strains on local governments in providing education, in providing health care, and on State governments in the same way, and also on the Federal Government.

The Center for Immigration Studies found that the cost to United States taxpayers for the cost of illegal immigration is approximately \$10.4 billion a year. And a large part of that cost is attributable to babies born to illegal immigrants.

In my State of Georgia, for example, I am told that a non-Caesarian section

child delivery with no complications costs approximately \$2,720. Now you multiply that figure, and probably my State's cost is less than the national average, but you multiply that by the 383,000-plus births every year, and you can instantly see that just in that initial health care delivery cost, it is a very significant sum.

But what does birthright citizenship then also do to our system? First of all, in 1996, when we passed the Immigration Reform Act, one of the things that many people have bragged about was a provision that said in general terms that if you are illegally in this country, you are not going to be entitled to any social benefits other than education at the elementary and secondary level and emergency medical care.

Now, we make a mockery of that by virtue of birthright citizenship because even though we say we are not going to extend those social services, by giving a child of an illegal immigrant citizenship status, you immediately have TANF, Aid to Families With Dependent Children, whatever term you call it in your community, those kinds of welfare social benefits flow through the child. There are also food stamps and housing subsidy benefits, and who are you going to deliver them to, a new child? Of course not. Those social benefits in the form of cash and other indicia of benefits flow through the hands of the illegal parents.

And are you going to deport the parents, an illegal immigrant who has given birth to a child who is a United States citizen? I say you probably are not, and the statistics bear me out.

So I would simply say, Mr. Speaker, if somebody is concerned about these issues, the next time they have to wait in line in the doctor's office or in the hospital or in the waiting room of the emergency clinic, or the next time that they are in the grocery checkout line and somebody is paying for food with food stamps and it is fairly apparent that they are not legally in this country and you want to know why, the why lies in birthright citizenship that is being granted to a child of that illegal immigrant.

Now, as I say, we are in the distinct minority in the world community of continuing to allow this practice to occur. I, along with Mr. BILBRAY and Mr. KING and many others in our conference, are authors of legislation that would attempt to correct this serious problem that we have.

Many who would dispute whether or not this is a part of the magnet that draws people into our country and to cross our borders illegally should take reference to a statement contained in one of the publications from the Department of Homeland Security. I would like to read from that publication. It says, "An industry has developed around this practice," that is, crossing the border illegally specifically to give birth, "with travel agents specializing in birth tours and clinics

providing post-natal care, which includes transportation services. For those seeking entry into this country, it is a small price to pay for legal entry and social benefits that accrue with citizenship."

So our own Department of Homeland Security acknowledges that it is indeed one of those magnets that causes us to have a problem with illegal immigration.

In 2002, it was reported by the Los Angeles Times in a study that they did looking at South Korea, and what they found was that since South Korea allows dual citizenship, that is both South Korea and United States citizenship, for a child born in the United States, they found that South Korea was hosting these so-called birth tours which were intended to bring pregnant women to the United States so they could deliver their child here and that child would be a United States citizen.

□ 2030

Now, they probably returned back to South Korea with that child. So what would be their motivation? Well, first of all, they would be entitled to the benefits of American citizenship, but another added advantage, since South Korea is a country that requires universal military service, it is a way of excluding that child from the requirements of South Korea that they be inducted into their military services. So it has consequences, not just to us, but to some of our allies such as South Korea.

So I would simply thank Mr. BILBRAY for the time you have allotted me tonight to speak on this issue. Hopefully, we will see some action on this issue of birthright citizenship. It can stand alone, or it can travel as a part of a more comprehensive immigration reform package; but I submit that unless we address this problem, it is only going to get worse. It is going to only magnify the ever-increasing problem of illegal immigration, and I would urge my colleagues to join with me and you and Mr. KING and others in sponsoring the legislation that we have tailored to try to address this problem.

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say thank you very much to Mr. DEAL for taking a leadership role on this issue. It is quite appropriate you are pointing out how broad the problem is of this automatic citizenship given to people that have no obligations, no responsibilities, and are leveraging the fact that some people think that everyone born on U.S. soil somehow gets automatic citizenship. The fact is I think that the Korean parents are a good example.

The subject to the jurisdiction clause of the 14th amendment does not only mean that you can be arrested. It means that you must, according to common law, be totally obligated. You must be able to be tried for treason and be forced into the military.

Can you imagine if these terrorists from Korea were told, sorry, you are

now going to be drafted into the United States Army? People would come unglued. They would say that is inhumane, that is outrageous, how can you do that. Well, it is just as outrageous to give automatic citizenship to the people that have no obligations and no responsibility to the Federal Government, to give them citizenship, as it is to require them to be tried for treason against the United States or to serve in the military when they are not, quote, unquote, subject to the jurisdiction in a manner that applies to the 14th amendment.

This thing we have to understand, that rights and responsibilities come together, and as these legal Korean tourists come to our country, they have certain rights and certain responsibilities, but they do not have total responsibility, and thus they do not have birthright citizenship.

I think that is a clause to get into. I just wish that the people who would be as outraged about us drafting a Korean tourist or trying them for treason will be just as outraged about the people leveraging and taking advantage of our hospitality and then trying to demand rights where the rights obviously do not exist historically or in fact.

I appreciate the fact that you took a leadership role on this after I got my 5-year sabbatical that the voters gave me from Congress. You picked up the baby and actually carried it, and I really appreciate that and your leadership will be appreciated.

It is astonishing that back in the 1990s when we first brought up this issue, some people were saying, well, what is this issue. But more and more when you go talk to the American people, they want to know what has kind of been tagged this, what they call it, "anchor baby" issue because they see this huge open door for abuse.

In California alone, I want you to know and I just say this to the people, how big a problem, how big a price tag can automatic citizenship to foreign nationals and illegal aliens can be. How big can it be? Just in California, it costs the State of California to pay for the births of the children of illegal aliens \$400 million a year, and that is a price tag to people who are illegally in the country.

Let us face it, that \$400 million could sure provide a lot of basic health care to legal Americans, both immigrants and U.S. citizens, that is being denied those people of need, while we accommodate those who have broken our laws and their families and encouraged them to emigrate.

So I thank you very much for taking this leadership role, and I greatly appreciate the fact that Georgia is represented on the Immigration Caucus, and that is a great advantage for us. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege to serve on the Immigration Caucus, and as someone who grew up on the Mexican border between San Diego and Tijuana, I saw this issue as it has evolved over the last 45 years.

I grew up in an area where illegal immigration was just sort of a matter of fact. You saw people going north, and I got to tell you, as a young man, you never knew where they were going. They were all going to a place called L.A. or norte, norte, and you never understood what was the impact in the communities beyond the border.

But, seriously, I think the one thing that I would ask those of you that live beyond the border, you do not see on the border, like those of us that grew up there, I happen to have had the privilege to serve as a life guard in a small community on the border called Imperial Beach. In that job, I had the experience of rescuing illegals when they were drowning in the Tijuana River. I recovered their bodies when they did not make it, and in the 1980s, some of you may not remember a thing called the bonsai charges, where the coyotes, the smugglers, would organize illegals into huge groups at the border and rush them up the freeway.

I would just ask any of you to consider what your reaction would be if you were driving along at 65 miles an hour, 55, and you saw massive pedestrians running at you on the freeway in a manner that you do not have a chance to stop. Well, let me tell you something. After seeing what happens when somebody gets hit by a vehicle at 55, 60 miles an hour, I became committed as a member of the county board of supervisors in San Diego to finally say stand up and say this is wrong, this is immoral, this is outrageous.

Americans should be ashamed that we do not control our frontier, that we do not guarantee our sovereignty on U.S. soil. And the immigration issue is an issue of sovereignty. It is a concept of protecting the land that our forefathers have given to us and also protecting those rights and those privileges that should and can be rendered to those who are citizens and legal residents.

But, sadly, we have found excuses to look the other way. Be it political correctness or some sick concept that encouraging illegal activity somehow is going to be good for America, it is sad that we allow not only illegal immigration but all the illegal activity that happens along the border.

I am really encouraged, though, to see colleagues like the gentleman from Georgia and Mr. KING, people from the interior, that get it, that understand that the immigration problem is not something at the border that can only be addressed at the border, but is something that is in our neighborhoods every day; that it is on the street corners, we see it every day; and that the American people, though they have been ignored on this issue for too long, are saying we are going to hold both parties accountable if you do not address that.

I think in all fairness, as a Republican, I think we can all agree that a

degree of the problems in the last election was that voters did not believe Republicans were doing enough and are going to demand that Democrats and Republicans put their partisanship on the side and take care of this problem.

I am glad to see the kind of general support that we have seen working on this issue and the community support on this; and at this time, if I may, Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to Mr. KING.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for organizing this Special Order here this evening, and I also thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DEAL) for making his presentation and making a compelling case for why we have to end this thing we call birthright citizenship, anchor babies, or more appropriately, more accurately, as automatic citizenship. It was never part of the concept constitutionally that we should grant that kind of a thing, for all the reasons that Mr. DEAL said and all the reasons that Mr. BILBRAY said, and a lot of other reasons besides.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would submit this, that I am going to roll out some facts and figures here, and I would ask that you maybe could pay attention and take some notes on this because it is important for us in this country not to be establishing an immigration policy based upon anecdotes or based upon emotions or based upon somebody's feelings, but base it upon some empirical data. We need to base our policy on some facts.

I would point out that I wrote a letter to the White House last year. It was off of a request of that White House liaison that took place last April, and by June 23, I was finally frustrated with my e-mails and phone calls to the liaison who promised to get me some answers.

□ 2040

So I put it in letter form, hard copy, sent it to the White House, sent it as an e-mail also, and instructed my staff to call the White House every week to get answers to the questions. Because it occurs to me that facts don't work for the people that are for open borders, but facts absolutely support the people that stand up for the rule of law and that stand up for national sovereignty and stand up for national border protection and enforcement in our workplace to shut off the jobs magnet.

I think we should start with a simple basis. If you go back to the beginning of Western Civilization and the Greeks, they would ask. They would look at things. They were proud. They lived in the age of reason. They said, I think, therefore I am. We are going to do deductive reasoning. We will start with the most logical, obvious questions, and we are going to reduce it down. If we can narrow ourselves down to a conclusion, we will come to a conclusion. If we can't, we will need more data.

They were proud of the way they could think and reason. That's the

foundation for Western Civilization. Had they not developed that age of reason, we would never have had the Age of Enlightenment. Without the Age of Enlightenment, we would never have had the United States of America. So we are founded upon reason.

Questions start from the beginning. Is there such a thing as too much immigration, legal or illegal? That is one of the questions I asked the President.

Then I asked, would you separate that into, is there such a thing as too much illegal immigration? And then, is there too much legal immigration? Then, the question that follows is, within those two categories, illegal in one category and legal immigration in the other category, if there is such a thing as too much, how much is too much? I will submit in the category of the illegal, one is too many.

I don't think the White House can take that position, neither can most of the Democrats and many of the Senators, Democrats and Republicans; one is too many. Is there such a thing as too much legal immigration? Yes, there has to be. Otherwise, you have to be willing to accept everybody on the planet that wants to come to America, and that might actually be everybody.

I would argue that this million or so that come in legally in a year is kind of an acceptable number, but is probably twice as many as the American people like to have. American people don't only want to eliminate all the illegal immigration, they want to reduce legal immigration, and they want to go back to an immigration policy that is designed to enhance the economic, the social and the cultural well-being of the United States of America.

Call it a selfish policy, if you like, but any Nation that subordinates their immigration policy to the people who will illegally cross the border from other countries doesn't have much of a policy and doesn't have much of a destiny if they don't have control of their own destiny. We have got to be in control. We have got to set that policy.

So I went on down this list of things, and if there is such a thing as too much legal or illegal immigration, then how much is too much? And how many do you believe would be legalized by the Senate version of the bill that passed last year?

Of course, before, I believe it was the Bingaman amendment, it was between 100 and 200 million would be legalized with a path to citizenship into the United States. Under the Senate version of the bill that probably would have had enough votes to pass with the majority of the Senate. Well, there were some caps that were put on because of that amendment that I just referenced, and then the number came down to, and this is the number I would ask of the White House, how many do you believe would be legalized by the Senate-passed version of the bill?

I can tell you at this point that, according to the Heritage Foundation, according to Robert Rector and accord-

ing to some real good solid statistical analysis done by Senator JEFF SESSIONS of Alabama, it comes to about 61.1 million people. The lowest number we could come up with about 53 or 54 million people; 66.1 million is the most reliable number over the next 20 years that would be legalized. By the Senate version, it has got to be nothing but amnesty.

I looked back, and how do you quantify that? In 1986, President Ronald Reagan signed an amnesty bill. He called it an amnesty bill. He was straight up honest about it. It was one of the two or three times he failed me, but at least he was straight up honest. Some will say that was to legalize 300,000, some will say it was 1 million, but not many will say that it actually brought in 3 million, some 3.1 million people who became citizens through this amnesty that was passed in 1986.

I have met some of those people. I have looked them in the eye, and I can tell you, they do not respect the rule of law like the rest of the Americans do. Therefore, they want amnesty for the rest of the illegals that are in this country, because they see it was good for them. Well, if something is good for someone, that is not a measure that it is a good policy for America. It is only a measure that it is good for someone.

But regardless, that was a series of questions that I asked of the President. In addition to that, I asked, would you be willing to agree to a hard annual cap that would control the aggregate of all of the different immigration policies that are out there and say that, from an annual basis, it never exceeds a certain number?

Now, I would start with 1 million and ratchet it down for the American people if I could. We could probably assimilate 1 million people in this country a year if we had good assimilation policies. That letter, with those questions, and those five questions as I recall that went to the President on June 23, and the White House got a call every single week until September.

Finally, I got an answer back, not from the White House, not from Secretary Chertoff, but a subordinate of Secretary Chertoff. The answer that came back was a cut and paste to somebody's constituent response letter and didn't answer a single question that I had asked.

So I wrote a letter back that said, Dear Mr. President, thanks for the letter that was in response to my letter full of questions, but you really didn't answer any of my questions. Would you like to try again? I would really appreciate it. I am the ranking member of the Immigration Subcommittee, and we have to set an immigration policy here.

Finally, I got a letter back, and it said, immigration is too complicated and too serious a policy to reduce it to numbers.

What a shocking thing. That is a single piece of all of this. So when you add to this, you can add that we have a

major problem on our borders. We are seeing \$60 billion out of our U.S. economy that are wired into the Western Hemispheric countries other than the United States. Those are transmittals from the wages in America; \$30 billion goes to Mexico; \$65 billion worth of illegal drugs come across that southern border into the United States. We are watching 11,000 people a night pour across the southern border.

In fact, just yesterday was the anniversary of the battle of the Alamo when Colonel Travis and those brave Texan Americans were slaughtered at the Alamo. Santa Ana's Army was only half the size of a nightly number of illegals that come across our southern border.

Those are simply some of the pieces. There are many other statistics out there that are empirical data, and I pray that this Nation will look at numbers, look at reality and not be stampeded by hyperbole or anecdotes and establish a policy that is good for the economic, the social and the cultural well-being of the United States of America.

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. KING, first of all, I have to say I am so proud that you are our ranking member on the Immigration Committee. With you on that, leading the Republican side of that committee. Hopefully you will be able, and I know it is a tough sell; I am going to meet with your chairman and try to point out what is the obsession that the Senate and some Members of the House of Representatives have to give amnesty and reward 12 to 13 to 15 million people for breaking the law?

Do they really think we can defend the concept, the rule of law, by having up to 60 million people in this country celebrating the fact that they are here because they broke the law? You know, I am thankful that I was able to listen to you tonight, because I keep saying, and I was saying to a couple of Senators this week, what is the obsession, what is the motivation for giving amnesty and rewarding people for breaking our laws? What message have you seen? What agenda are you fulfilling? What political group are you fulfilling?

Now that you brought it up, you are right, you point out you gave amnesty to a group that originally was proposed to be 300,000, ended up with all the delays in the agenda to be 3 million; then you get all of their relatives coming in. This is the group that is lobbying and able to vote to encourage more people to come in, and this downward spiral has started. If we don't stop it now with the American people that really believe in the rule of law, that really believe in the concept of common decency that you do not punish somebody for waiting patiently to immigrate legally while you reward somebody who breaks the law, if we are not willing to stop this downward spiral now, it will continue to grow larger and faster down the line.

I think the American people here know this is not a Republican or Demo-

cratic issue; this is an American issue. If anybody doesn't believe that the rule of law is important, I can take you to a lot of places I spent a lot of time in other countries where people can buy off the law by politics or by money.

This amnesty, it just seems like the most un-American concept I heard. Let me tell you something, my son was sitting there, 19 or 20 years old, and he brought up the interesting issue, and I guess from the mouths of babes, he said, Dad, let me get this straight, Mr. KENNEDY says that if you break the law for 5 years, you now get rewarded for it? Does this mean that if I am willing to testify that I have driven without a license for 5 years, I get a license for free?

□ 2050

Because that is what people think they can do with immigration and make it work. It won't work with the traffic situation; it won't work with an immigration issue.

I am glad you bring this up, and just seeing a self-made special interest group that is driving us toward an abyss of the destruction of the entire concept of what this greatest Republic we call the "American experience." I yield to Mr. KING.

Mr. KING of IOWA. I thank the gentleman from California for adding to this subject matter in that way.

A piece that I left out was that the 66.1 million that would have been legalized by the Senate version of amnesty last year happens to be, and I believe coincidentally, the sum total of all Americans who have immigrated into the United States and become naturalized, most through Ellis Island, but done so legally. We are talking about doing that in one fell swoop.

So, in 1986 it was a 300,000, maybe a million number. That was a great big piece to try to swallow and get our brains around. In 1995, before the 1996 election, there was an accelerated effort, especially in California, to naturalize a million people so that they could go to the polls and vote in that Clinton/Gore election. And we all know where the incentive was, on which side of the aisle that was. That was perhaps 1 million in 1986. At most, it was 1 million in 1995 before the 1996 elections. That was an appalling number to think about a million people getting fast-tracked to citizenship or amnesty. And this is a time now we are seriously talking about 66 million people. Sixty-six times an amount that was too many in 1995, it was too many in 1986, it is absolutely too many today.

There is another component of this, too, and that is that we know on the left, and I am going to say on the part of Democrats, they recognize that they are going to pick up about two out of every three immigrants that would have amnesty. They have a strong political motive that subordinates the United States, our Constitution, their oath of office, by the way. That is the incentive. It is a political incentive on

the left hand side of the aisle. On the right hand side of the aisle we have elitists. They aren't all on the right hand side of the aisle; we have plenty of left-wing rich folks, too, that are capitalizing on cheap labor. They believe that they have some kind of birthright to always be hiring cheap labor and continue getting richer off the backs of the people they are hiring.

Think of this kind of like a barbell. On the one side, the weights over here on the barbell are the liberals that get all the political power that comes from illegal immigration. On the other side there are probably about 2-1 Republican conservatives that get empowered by getting rich off of cheap labor. In the middle is the handle of the barbell, that is the middle class, the middle class that used to be an ever-broadening, an ever more prosperous middle class that now is losing its purchasing power and being narrowed by the greed of the people that are politically greedy on the one side, and economically greedy on the other side.

I asked this question to the business community in America, because I know I will not convince the people on the other side of the aisle, where will you apply your trade once we have destroyed this America that is based upon the rule of law?

I will yield back to the gentleman from California.

Mr. BILBRAY. Let me say, what we are fighting for here is nothing short of the middle class. The fact is there are those on the left and the right that say we desperately need more poor people. You know why? It is because the major corporates want cheap labor on the right, and the left wants cheap votes. And they are willing to sell their children's birthright out, their grandchildren's future out just to be able to capitalize off of this illegal activity.

At this time, I have the privilege of recognizing the gentleman from California who has agreed to be the subcommittee chairman on the Border Security Policy Committee team for the Immigration Caucus, Mr. ROYCE.

Mr. ROYCE, I yield to you.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I would like to start by congratulating Congressman BILBRAY for his position as head of the Immigration Caucus. I thank him, also, for taking on this tough, but very important, issue.

What I wanted to make as a point, Mr. Speaker, was that before 9/11 border security was not seen as a national security matter. But we, as an institution, asked the 9/11 Commission to give us direction, to look at how 9/11 occurred and to suggest steps that we should take. Today, thanks to the 9/11 Commission, we now know that national security must be the number one priority when it comes to border security policy.

The commission found that our immigration system has, in their words, "the greatest potential to develop an expanded role in counterterrorism." And I think that still holds true today.

The challenge we face for national security in an age of terrorism is to prevent the very few people who pose overwhelming risks from entering or remaining in the United States undetected. And terrorists, unfortunately, have used evasive methods to enter and stay in our country, including specific travel methods and routes over the border, liaisons with corrupt government officials, human smuggling networks, and immigration and identity fraud. This needs to be addressed. It is elementary. It is imperative as well to border security to know who is coming into the country. I don't think anyone today can say with any certainty that we know who is crossing our borders.

When I was chairman of the Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation, I held field hearings on the border in San Diego and in Laredo, Texas. One thing that was expressed at these hearings is that the border fence that was built in San Diego is very effective. The double fence on that border, according to the Border Patrol that testified at these hearings about the effectiveness of the border fence, is, as they said, a great force multiplier. The reason they wanted to expand the fence and the reason we passed legislation to do that and included an appropriation of \$1.2 billion to do it was partly because the Border Patrol told us that there were over 400 attacks on the Border Patrol and that if they could have that double border fence the way they had it in San Diego at other routes where the smugglers cross, that would help protect them. They said it expanded their enforcement capability; it has allowed them the discretion to redeploy agents to areas of vulnerability or risk. It is one component, they said, that certainly has been integral, in their words, to everything we have accomplished raising the level of our security in San Diego. What happened in San Diego? The crime rates on both sides of that border, which had been lawless, dropped by over 50 percent on the San Diego side and on the Tijuana side.

With the establishment of the border fence in San Diego, crime rates fell off dramatically, but also vehicle drive-thrus fell off. San Diego is no longer one of the most prolific drug smuggling corridors. It was cut by over 90 percent.

The bill that we passed last year puts a fence where it is needed most, in the areas that have the highest instances of drug smuggling, human trafficking, gang activity. All of the smugglers' routes, where there are roads, basically, through those areas, all of that will be fenced with a double border fence. It would allow the Border Patrol to better focus its resources and better protect our borders.

Now, we have some say that to finish that project would cost \$3 billion. Well, \$3 billion is less than the cost of the 250,000 inmates who have committed felonies, who are here illegally in the United States. The cost to the taxpayers in one year is more than the

cost of building that double border fence.

But the focus I want to make here, the point I want to make, it is a matter of national security. We had Kris Kobach testify at my hearings. He was chief adviser on immigration law to former Attorney General John Ashcroft. And he spoke of concern about terrorists illegally crossing our borders into this country. I will just share with you a couple of cases he cited.

Mahmoud Kourani was one; he was indicted in 2004. He paid to be smuggled out of Beirut, Lebanon; paid \$3,000 to the Mexican Consulate to be smuggled into Mexico. And at that point he paid a smuggling organization to bring him in the trunk of a car over to the United States. This is the brother of the Hezbollah general who was in charge of security in the southern sector of Lebanon at the time that the attacks occurred. He was involved in the attacks against Israel. I was there in Israel in August. I visited Rambam Hospital when the city was under rocket attack and saw some of the effects of Hezbollah there in that country, where there were 500 civilian victims in that hospital.

And I can just tell you that his brother pleaded guilty to providing material support to Hezbollah. He had been trained in Iran in every method of explosives, and he was sentenced to 5 years in our prison, along with some of his colleagues, who were also caught as a result of our operations.

□ 2100

Kobach went on to cite a second case involving Farida Ahmed, who was on a terrorist watch list. He was on that watch list because he was suspected of being an al Qaeda operative trying to get into the United States. Ahmed was caught in Texas at McAllen Miller International Airport on July 19, 2004. He was trying to get up to New York City. He produced a South African passport with pages torn out and with no U.S. entry stamps. He later confessed to entering the country illegally by crossing the Rio Grande River.

In 2005, 3,722 individuals from state sponsors of terrorism or countries with terrorist ties were caught trying to illegally enter the United States. I know some of the stories from border guards who have told me. One showed me his injuries that he sustained when he stopped an individual who originally was from Uzbekistan, had been trained, he said, in an Afghan training camp. This was the individual's second attempt to enter illegally into the United States. The first time he had tried to fly in through an airport and he was turned back. This time he came over the border. When he was caught, he was motivated enough, the individual, to bite the shoulder of the Border Patrol agent so severely that the Border Patrol agent had to be hospitalized.

The reality is that we have some very determined foes attempting to get

into the United States and our experience with Hezbollah agents frankly should awaken us to the fact that we should take the advice of the Border Patrol when they say to us, give us that double border fence. We have had over 400 attacks in 1 year or instances of violence against our agents. Give us the double border fence we need.

Well, we have got the appropriation. We have got the authorization. The first appropriation for \$1.2 billion. We need several billion more to finish the whole project. But we should take their advice. It's past time we strengthen operational control of our borders and ports through additional physical barriers and fencing and greater use of state-of-the-art technology and surveillance across our entire border.

The border fence is needed, it's needed now, so one of my goals, and I am sure the caucus's goals, is to ensure that the fence gets the funding it needs and that the entire 700 miles gets built as the act that was signed into law says it should be built.

I thank you again, Congressman BILBRAY; Mr. Speaker, thank you, and I will yield back to Congressman BRIAN BILBRAY of San Diego.

Mr. BILBRAY. Thank you very much, Mr. ROYCE. Seeing that you are the chairman of the Border Security subcommittee, it is good to hear today that the administration has found the money to finally fill in the border tunnels across our border. A lot of people when I say the fence isn't working, if the fence wasn't working, the cartels would not be spending millions of dollars trying to figure out how to tunnel under the fence.

Mr. ROYCE. If the gentleman will yield, I was in your fine city and had an opportunity to go down to visit some of the Border Patrol agents that I talk with and work with. One of them showed me a station across from the Border Patrol station on the U.S. side, and he said that in that station, they had actually filmed work on a tunnel, it was actually on Mexico property, that one of the cartels was building, digging a tunnel, and they turned over, he said, to the Mexican government, and the Mexican equivalent of the FBI arrested two Border Patrol agents, customs agents on the Mexican side who were involved with the cartels in actually supervising the digging of that tunnel.

The point I am making is that there is a degree of corruption here in some of the institutions in Mexico which have unfortunately led to a lack of cooperation in enforcement of our borders. And because of that lack of cooperation, I think it is doubly important that not only we go forward with the effort to fill these tunnels, but let's again get the fence that the Border Patrol says it needs built.

Mr. BILBRAY. I thank you for that. Because before the fence, as somebody that grew up down there and watched this game being played, any criminal on either side of the border could jump

across the border and avoid enforcement on the other. Even in Mexico, they had the area called the Zona Norte, the northern zone, and everyone knew that it was a criminal hideout because they could always jump onto the American side if the Mexican officials came. So this issue of creating a barrier is common sense and common decency.

As Governor Ruffo of Baja, California, once said, he said something in Spanish and said in Mexico, we have a saying, Good fences make good neighbors. Frankly, I think those people that always attacked the concept of having secure borders should just listen to Ruffo's advice that common sense does go a long way.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. ROYCE. It is certainly true that the lack of border security leads to a criminal element controlling that border. In this case, it is the cartels. And it is important to remember again that the erection of the border fence in San Diego led not only to a reduction of crime on the U.S. side by more than 50 percent but again led to a reduction of crime on the Mexican side of the border and in Tijuana by more than 50 percent. Why? Because of the very point you have just made, the cartels lost control once the rule of law was applied to that sector of the border and law enforcement was able to get in control.

Mr. BILBRAY. I appreciate that. The fact is most Americans may not understand that it is so out of control that they have had over 30 police officers murdered in Tijuana and over nine Federal prosecutors assassinated in Tijuana. In fact, it was so bad that the Mexican government 10 years ago sent their army to the American border. You hear an outcry here when we talk about the possibility of sending our troops or our National Guard down to the border. I wonder where these people are that are so outraged about America exercising our sovereignty, using our resources, when they ignored the fact that Mexico did the right thing by bringing their troops up.

I appreciate, Mr. Chairman, your work on this and look forward to working with you.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about border control, but I want to make sure that the American people and everybody recognizes, in your district, the real problem exists that those who hire illegals are the ones who are creating the number one source of illegal immigration. When we talk about the violence at the border, when we talk about people dying, drowning at the border trying to come into this country illegally, the people that are at fault for that are those employers who provide the incentive for people to break our immigration laws and those who are profiteering off illegal immigration, and that is the illegal employers.

I would ask you and I would ask every Member of Congress and I would

ask everyone who is listening across the United States to take a look at H.R. 98 which is a bill that Silvestre Reyes, a very respected Democrat from El Paso, who is a former Border Patrol agent, and David Dreier, a Republican, former chairman of the Rules Committee, put together working with the men and women who actually have to control our frontier and control immigration, the immigration agents themselves. They put together a bill called H.R. 98, and it is so simple that there is no excuse for anybody not to support it, unless they think that there is an advantage to encourage illegal immigration.

In this bill, it says one thing. It says, let's get rid of the 37 different documents that anybody can prove they are legal to be in the country to work. Let's go down to one simple document, a tamper-resistant Social Security card to allow Americans and foreign nationals alike to prove that a Social Security number that they are required by law to provide for employment is actually their number and not one that they have taken or 20 of their buddies have taken from somebody else and are using because they have stolen a Social Security number. One document for any employer to know to check, to be able to verify electronically that whoever is in front of them is qualified to work in the United States. Because it is essential that we give employers a simple, verifiable way of knowing who is legal and who is not legal so that we can do what I think Democrats and Republicans who really care about America can do together and, that is, crack down on the employers who knowingly hire illegals. We all know who they are, we know where they are, and we need to eliminate the excuse for hiring illegals. We need to start cracking down on that.

I just ask that when we get into this issue, let's not talk about amnesty, let's not talk about excuses for rewarding people for illegal immigration, let's talk about working together and cracking down on the illegal employers, making it clear that if you want to come to this country and work, then you come here legally, you play by the rules, you get rewarded for that.

□ 2110

So, Mr. Speaker, a lot of people may not know, but I am privileged to have a mother who is a legal immigrant who came back to this country back in the 1940s. And as she reminds me so often, everyone who rewards illegal immigration is insulting those immigrants who came here and played by the rules. Anybody who talks about giving amnesty or any reward to those who have violated our immigration law is insulting the hard work, the patience, and the perseverance to be a legal immigrant and everyone who has played by the rules and stayed within the law.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say tonight that every Wednesday night we are going to try as the Immigration

Caucus to give a report to the American people about what is going on with the immigration issue. It is something that politicians have ignored for too long, but it is something that the American people are demanding that we finally address if we want to stay in this city representing the people.

So tonight I appreciate the time to be able to address this issue.

30—SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I thank the Speaker for this time, once again allowing us to begin the 30-Something Working Group.

We have a lot of issues to talk about. And as everyone who has followed the 30-Something Working Group over the years knows, this is our attempt to let the American people know what is happening in their Congress and what the issues are that are being discussed, and we have requested some time here to be able to go into some detail on what these issues are. And I wanted to start today by talking about the situation at Walter Reed, which I know is a subject that is of great concern to everybody in this Chamber, and it is certainly the issue that I am hearing the most about as I travel around my district. And if we have some time after we conclude that discussion, we may move on to some other issues.

But I wanted to start by talking about the situation at Walter Reed. And I have put up here for my colleagues to take a look at the Newsweek cover from this week, and we see here that this is a national story. It is the number one story in the country, and it tells the story about how we are, unfortunately in many cases, failing our wounded. You can see it on the cover.

What we are talking about with the situation at Walter Reed is we have brave men and woman who are fighting for this country, who are putting their lives on the line, who are making every possible sacrifice, and they are coming home in need of medical treatment, in many cases serious health situations, long-term medical problems, and we have not seen the best quality of care that those men and women deserve. And the situation that has been uncovered recently at Walter Reed is something that was uncovered by a Washington Post expose'. It wasn't brought to light by the people at Walter Reed, it wasn't brought to light by elected officials, it wasn't brought to light by anyone except for a series of newspaper articles.

There are two issues that we need to discuss. The second of those issues is, why did it take a Washington Post news article before people started to talk about this issue, before people started to be held accountable for this issue? Which, as I am going to talk about in the time line of events, for those of you who may wonder how this

all came about, what were the complaints, how long has this situation been known, we are going to walk through that entire time line tonight. But the second issue is, why did that Washington Post news article become the first source for all of this to happen?

The number one issue that we need to deal with as a Congress and that we can promise the American people that we are going to deal with is we need to find a solution to this problem right now. We understand there is a situation that needs to be resolved. And to be candid, the American people aren't calling for another blue ribbon panel that is going to take a 2-year study and issue a report that is 2½ inches thick and sit on somebody's desk before anything happens. They want results right now.

We need to go into every military and veterans health care facility in this country and make a determination: Are the conditions substandard? Are there actions that need to be taken? And, if so, let's deal with that immediately. Let's not wait for the course of a long-term study. There is going to be room for that and there are going to be people held accountable, and that is not to say that we are not going to work hard to detail every single fact of how this came to be. But the most important part for our military men and women who were promised quality health care when they signed up is we need to restore their confidence and their trust in the system, which right now, justifiably, is lacking. Because we have military men and women every day who are coming back, not just to Walter Reed, but all across this country to Department of Defense facilities, and veterans who have put their lives on the line who are coming back and using the VA health care system and finding that the care in many cases, as has been described with Walter Reed, is substandard. This is outrageous and this is unacceptable, and this Congress is going to take the appropriate action to make sure that these things are taken care of and they do not happen again.

So, again, the two issues: number one, fix the problem now; number two, let's get to the bottom of why it took so long for people to be held accountable and for us to get to the point where this situation was known to the American people and especially to our brave men and women.

So I do have a time line of events that we in the 30-Something Working Group are going to turn into a chart which we will be able to display at one of our future meetings, but now I did just want to read some of these things that have happened in the past.

In mid-to-late 2004, a very senior Member of this Congress, with his wife, announced that he was going to stop visiting Walter Reed out of frustration. He said he had voiced his concerns about what he was seeing to his commanders, including Major General

Kiley, over the troubling incidents that he had witnessed. And this, again, is a very senior Member of this Congress, said his efforts were rebuffed and ignored. And he has a quote that says when he brought problems to the attention of Walter Reed, he was made to feel very uncomfortable. Now, that is unacceptable, and that was 2½ years ago. So right there we have a very senior Member of Congress voicing concerns and being ignored.

In November 2005, the Congress was then of course controlled by the Republican Party, and the House Veterans' Affairs Committee announced that, for the first time in at least 55 years, veteran service organizations would no longer have the opportunity to present testimony before a joint hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. So in November of 2005, we had an announcement from this Congress, then under Republican control, that we would not be investigating any situations and there would be no forum to bring before Congress complaints about what we were seeing at Walter Reed.

The pattern continues. In September of 2006, 13 Senators sent a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee to preserve language in the House Defense Appropriations bill that prohibits U.S. Army from outsourcing 350 Federal jobs at Walter Reed Medical Center. This is September of 2006. A similar provision was defeated by a close vote in the Senate of 50-48 during the bill's previous consideration.

Also in September of 2006, and again for my colleagues watching we are going to have a chart that will illustrate this and it be visible. But in September of 2006, Walter Reed awards a 5-year, \$120 million contract to IAP Worldwide Services, which is run by a former senior Halliburton official, to replace a staff of 300 Federal employees. So those employees were replaced in September of 2006, despite the fact there had been to that point complaints by very senior Members of Congress about what was happening at Walter Reed.

□ 2120

I would pause there to ask my colleague from Connecticut, Mr. MURPHY, if he is ready to weigh in on this issue. And if not, I can certainly continue down the time line.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Thank you, Mr. ALTMIRE. I want to let you get back to the time line because I think it is important for people to understand where this started, and to talk a little bit about where we are going, because so much of the news these days is filled with bad news, bad news for our veterans, bad news for the security of our country. And we talk about that a lot here. Mr. ALTMIRE, as you know, this place focuses on crises often and on bad news.

The good news is that things are changing. The good news is that there is a commitment now to make up for

the wrongs of the past. But it is fairly mind-blowing to people out there to think that it took The Washington Post to uncover what was happening in our veterans system. Because, Mr. ALTMIRE, as you know, veterans back in our districts, back in Pennsylvania and in Connecticut and throughout this country, have known what is going on with veterans for years. I mean, they have been down here in Washington, DC, month after month, year after year trying to tell this Congress that there are waiting lines for care; that the conditions are often substandard because of years of neglect in capital improvements; that they simply don't have the access to the funds necessary to pay for the rising premiums and rising copays.

And before this story in The Washington Post broke, you, Mr. ALTMIRE, and those of us in the 30-Something Working Group were yelling about this on the House floor. We got here with that mandate, to change things.

So you are going to run through, I think, some fairly amazing comments from some of the soldiers and staff at Walter Reed Hospital in terms of what they have been dealing with over the past several years. But we just need to remind people out there that you can't absolve this former Congress in the last 12 years from the catastrophes that we are uncovering within our medical system, specifically, in this case, within our veterans medical system simply because The Washington Post didn't get around to writing about it until last month, because if you were back home listening to this, you heard it time after time again.

I mean, here is the thing. We are talking about a substandard level of care for our veterans. We should be talking about the gold standard of care for our veterans. And we shouldn't be talking about just lifting up Walter Reed Hospital so that it meets the standards of dignity that every other hospital in our health care system abides by. We should be talking about raising up veterans care so that this is the highest standard. It is what everyone else in the medical community and the provider community seeks to meet. The people coming home from Afghanistan and Iraq, people coming home from Vietnam and previous engagements should come home to the best care this country can provide, Mr. ALTMIRE.

And I would like to yield back to you so you can continue to tell the story of what we have found at Walter Reed hospital.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Thank you, Mr. MURPHY. And I wanted to, before getting into some of the quotes that the men and women who have been in Walter Reed have, over the course of time provided, I did want to continue down the time line. And I had left off with the 5-year, \$120 million contract that was awarded to a former Halliburton official which led to the replacement of 300 employees at Walter Reed.

And I wanted to, then, quote from a New York Times article about that issue. It said: "The prospect of privatization at Walter Reed led to a large exodus of skilled personnel after the Army reversed results, actually changed the results of an audit conducted that government employees could do the job more cheaply."

So they had done a study that showed that things could be done in that manner. But they decided to reverse the results and move in the direction that we have described. And we have, unfortunately, seen the results.

I will move in, now, to some of the quotes. And it is troubling, I will tell my colleagues who are watching, to hear some of the complaints that were made. And I would remind, again, that in 2005, the Republican leadership of this Congress made a decision that they were going to not hold the joint hearings on this issue to allow some of these things to be brought to the attention, not only of the Congress, but of the American people. And it is unfortunate what the result has been, that 2 years went by and these things continued, and these quotes are the result.

And I am going to refer my colleagues to this chart as I am reading: "The mold, mice and rot at Walter Reed's Building 18 compose a familiar scenario for many soldiers back from Iraq or Afghanistan. Soldiers and veterans at other facilities report bureaucratic disarray similar to Walter Reed's. Indifferent, untrained staff, lost paperwork, medical appointments that drop from the computers, and long waits for consultations."

And what this describes, unfortunately, is that the problem at Walter Reed is not unique to Walter Reed, but it is a systemic problem across the country's military and Veterans Affairs facilities. And that is very troubling to me.

I have three VA hospitals in western Pennsylvania, one of which is in my district. And it is undergoing a \$200 million renovation right now. And I am hopeful that we will, at that time, have the premiere Veterans Affairs highest-quality facility in the entire country.

But the systemic problem facing our military health facilities and our Veterans Affairs facilities is shown by some of these quotes. So, again, my colleagues want to refer to this chart. From California, this says: "The room was swarming with fruit flies, trash was overflowing, and a syringe was lying on the table." That is from a facility in California.

From a facility in Fort Knox, Kentucky: "The living conditions were the worst I had ever seen for soldiers. Paint peeling, mold, windows that didn't work. I went to the hospital chaplain to get them to issue blankets and linens. There were no nurses."

So as troubling as the situation at Walter Reed is for those of us who are now delving into the details and learning the unfortunate facts, it is even

more troubling to think that these are problems that are happening all across this country.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. ALTMIRE can you yield for a moment? Because I want to talk about, as these revelations were coming out in The Washington Post and in articles that followed, this administration had a choice to make. They could open up this issue and they could allow for a vetting of these problems and put them out in the open air and come together, as Republicans and Democrats, to solve them; or they could try to paper over it and cover it up.

And some of the most disturbing things that have happened in this sequence of events, which are a little bit later on your time line, is what happened after these revelations came into the light. We know that in the days following that article that the soldiers at Walter Reed were told that they couldn't speak to the media about what was happening.

We know that the Government Reform and Oversight Committee, which I sit on, had to subpoena the former head, the fired chief of Walter Reed Army Medical Center after Army officials told him that he couldn't come testify at the hearing.

And so I am so thankful that we have a majority now in charge of this House which is actually going to do the work to uncover, I hope, not too many more abuses that we haven't already seen in the newspaper reports that have come out. But the fact is that right now we don't have an administration that is helping us try to correct this, Mr. ALTMIRE. And it makes our job even harder; but makes me, I think, and I think the American people are in the same position, that they are thankful that there are people here doing that work.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Well, the level of frustration I think that we are all feeling builds every day as more of these facts come out. And I think the most upsetting part is the fact that these are situations that were known within the military health apparatus, and nothing was done about it.

Complaints were made from patients. Complaints were made from families. Complaints were made, as I talked about earlier, not just from Members of Congress, but from very senior and influential Members of Congress, all of which were ignored.

And continuing with our around-the-country look at some other things that have happened, if my colleagues could refer to this chart.

□ 2130

This comes from Fort Campbell in Kentucky where they said: "There were yellow signs on the door stating that our barracks had asbestos." This was an open and operating military facility.

From Fort Irwin in California: "Most of us had to sign waivers where we understand that the housing we were in

failed to meet minimal government standards."

It is very troubling for me, and I am sure for my colleagues listening, to read and to hear these quotes and think of the fact that there is no group of people that should stand ahead of our men and women in the military and our military veterans when it comes time to allocate Federal resources. And we have a Federal budget that is approaching \$3 trillion, and we certainly spend a lot of that on the Defense, and rightly so, Department of Defense. And to hear these situations taking place, it is just very upsetting.

So, continuing, for my colleagues, to refer to the chart again: "Behind the door of Army Specialist Jeremy Duncan's room, part of the wall is torn and hangs in the air, weighted down with black mold. When the wounded combat engineer stands in his shower and looks up, he can see the bathtub on the floor above through a rotted hole. Signs of neglect are everywhere. Mouse droppings, belly-up cockroaches, stained carpets, cheap mattresses."

And I will move to the last chart we have with these quotes, and then we can discuss it a little further. This is from building 18, which is the subject of the Washington Post report on Walter Reed which began this whole investigation: "Life in building 18 is the bleakest homecoming for men and women whose government promised them good care in return for their sacrifices. 'I hate it,' said one soldier, who stays in his room all day. 'There are cockroaches. The elevator doesn't work. The garage door doesn't work. Sometimes there is no heat, no water.'"

Well, I do want to assure my colleagues and the American people and reiterate what I said earlier that by far the more important thing here is fixing the problem. We have outlined, I think, in pretty graphic detail what the problem is and the scope of the problem. We are not just talking about one facility at Walter Reed, although that has been the source of the beginning of this story. We are talking about facilities all across this country. And we do need a top-to-bottom review of every single facility. Let us find every problem that exists and let us fix it right now. That is the number one issue.

And we are not as interested in casting blame in this situation. There is no question people need to be held accountable for this problem. And the hearings that we have had and the hearings that this Congress is going to continue to have with the Armed Services Committee, with the Veterans Affairs Committee and with the Government Oversight Committee, we are going to get to the bottom of how this could possibly have happened, why it happened, who is responsible and who should be held accountable. But, again, that is the secondary issue. The primary issue is fixing the problem now. And I want to assure the American people, as I am sure my friend Mr.

MURPHY does, that this timeline that I was reading from is going to stop in March 2007, as far as the situation being ignored and the situation not being brought to light. This is a new day. It is a new Congress. And we are going to take action. And it is unfortunate, and I am regretful that it took this long. But we are here now, and the situation that we are describing is not going to be easy, but we have a commitment in this Congress for Members like Mr. MURPHY and myself that place no greater priority than finding the resolution to this problem and to our Nation's military men and women.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. ALTMIRE, you hit it right on the head. It is, fix the problem, hold people accountable, in that order. We need to start holding people accountable here. I think that is a lot of frustration that led to you and I coming here and 40 or so of our fellow new colleagues here. I think a lot of the impetus that brought us here was this sense that nobody was being held accountable for what was happening in the government, whether it be the failure of our military strategy in Iraq or whether it be the failure of many of our domestic programs here at home.

So we have got to keep the focus and the light of this place on finally holding this administration and the people in it and, frankly, even Members of this legislature accountable for their actions. But we have got to fix the problem first because people didn't send us here just to investigate and hold hearings and put out subpoenas. They want that responsibility of Congress to come back. They want us to fulfill that constitutional obligation. But they sent us here to get stuff done. And that is the miracle of what has happened here over the last 2 months is that we are fixing problems. We are not just talking about it. We are actually doing what we are saying.

The first 100 hours was all about that, Mr. ALTMIRE. It had to be for the two of us one of the proudest moments of our life to be here joining hands with many of our Republican colleagues and for the first time making this place work again. Passing new bills to fund higher education, reforming the Medicare prescription drug law, investing in stem cell research; doing it with Democrats and Republicans, making this place work again.

So here is the thing. We proved we can solve problems. We proved that we can work as Republicans and Democrats to fix things. And maybe we are confronted with our biggest problem; not just what we have uncovered in our veterans' system, what people like you and I have known for years, but the greater quagmire which exists in our military today in the situation we have got ourselves in Iraq. But we need to take both of these on, fix the problems to the extent that we can, and then hold people accountable because what we know is that we weren't ready for this war. We weren't ready for this war

with the equipment, the trucks and the kits we needed for our troops. We know that, when this war began, we were \$56 billion underfunded within the Army for the equipment that they needed. We know that, after the invasion, it took 18 months for American soldiers to receive body armor; 18 months of being on the front lines before they got the body armor that they needed. And we know the health care system wasn't ready for the legions of troops that came back.

I think I shared this on the floor the other night: A group of veterans came into my office and shared with me a statistic that was as interesting as it was sobering, that in conflicts earlier in this century, on average three wounded soldiers came back for every soldier that died on the battlefield. Today 16 soldiers come back wounded for every soldier that dies on the battlefield. And that is due to some of the advances in armor protection equipment. It is also due to the miracles of modern medicine and the response time that our medics and doctors in the field are able to perform.

But it means that we have more people coming into our hospitals with more complex, more lasting injuries. They need better care, and they need faster care. And it appears that no one at the outset of this war was thinking about this problem ahead of time. They weren't preparing our military for battle. They didn't have a plan to occupy that country. They didn't think, it seems sometimes, more than a few seconds about the political realities that would emerge on the ground as we invaded Iraq. And now it turns out they also didn't think about what to do with the veterans when they come back.

Mr. ALTMIRE, I never served in the military. I never fired a gun. I have never been shot at. I get to serve in this Chamber on a cold night like tonight in Washington, DC, in a nice, heated place indoors because my contemporaries, my classmates made a different decision. They decided to go overseas and protect this Nation. And there isn't a day that I get up that I am not grateful for the decision that my friends and my relatives and my classmates made to allow me to serve this country in a very different manner. So as unfathomable as it is to me to think about what it is like to be on the ground in Baghdad today, to have veterans comparing their experiences in our own domestic veterans' health care system to the situations that they faced on the ground in Iraq is unconscionable to me. Think about what it must be like to come back to this country maimed, injured, perhaps with legs, arms amputated, and to enter a system with flies, with garbage, with syringes. I mean, we know what is happening with soldiers coming back with PTSD and other mental health issues from what they have seen on the battlefield, and to think that we are putting them into a system which not only abuses the sense of honor that we

should have for those that come back. We should be celebrating them rather than putting them in these conditions.

□ 2140

But I am sure it aggravates what must be an unbelievably complicated transition back to life here in the United States. We need to start honoring their service again. And God forbid we ever have to engage in another military action in this country again. God forbid we have to send our brave young men and women overseas to fight.

You know that in our lifetimes we will see that moment. We hope we don't. We hope we are wise enough in this Chamber to prevent another foreign engagement from happening, but the chances are that you and I may vote sometime during our service here to do this again.

We better get it right that time. We better make the investment up front to make sure they are safe when they head over to that battlefield, and when they come home, the services are there for them.

We are going to fix it. We are going to fix it and hold people accountable, and we are going to do it in that order. The American people for a long time maybe didn't have confidence when people stood up here and said there is a problem and we are going to do something about it. In this Congress, that is going to be our hallmark. We are going to be able to go home in the coming weeks and months and tell people that what you read about, whether it be in Newsweek or the Washington Post, is going to be taken care of.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. You talked about investments, making investments in our troops and making investments in our veterans. As you know on this 30-Something Working Group, I have spent a lot of time talking about our Nation's veterans and our VA healthcare system, and I am going to spend a lot more time talking about our VA healthcare system, because, as I said, there is no group that should stand ahead of our Nation's veterans when it comes time to make funding decisions.

I wanted to talk a little bit about the decisions that have been made in past years. We have talked about this before, and I have another chart here that I would like my colleagues to take a look at. This is the underfunding, the chronic underfunding of the VA healthcare system.

We have talked before about the fact that President Bush has delivered seven State of the Union addresses now and he has only mentioned veterans healthcare in one of those seven State of the Union addresses.

I think as a Congress we have a responsibility when we talk about supporting our troops and we talk about supporting the brave men and women who we are sending off to battle, who were promised quality healthcare in

the VA health system when they signed up, we have an obligation to fund all of them at levels at which they can obtain this quality healthcare.

So let's take a look at what has happened in recent years. I refer to the chart.

In January of 2003, President Bush's budget cut veterans healthcare and eliminated 164,000 veterans from the roles of eligibility for VA healthcare. That was in January of 2003.

In March of that same year, this Congress's budget, the Republican budget that cut \$14 billion from veterans healthcare, passed. 199 Democrats voted against it in this Chamber, but, unfortunately, at that point the Democrats were in the minority and they couldn't prevent these cuts. We have seen what the result has been of that \$14 billion cut.

In March of 2004, the Republican budget that shortchanged veterans healthcare by an additional \$1.5 billion passed Congress, and this time 201 Democrats voted against it. But, again, being in the minority, Democrats were unable to prevent those cuts, and we have seen the result.

In March of 2005, continuing, President Bush's budget shortchanged veterans healthcare by an additional \$2 billion for 2005 and cut VA healthcare by \$14 billion over the next 5 years. 201 Democrats voted against that.

So I think, Mr. MURPHY, you would agree that you see a trend developing here over time of just cut after cut after cut to the VA healthcare system, and that is, A, not fair and not just, but it is also not sustainable, without encountering the types of problems and the systemic difficulties that we are seeing across the VA healthcare system.

So in the summer of 2005, after serious Democratic pressure, months and months of pressure and warnings that the shortfall was going to be detrimental to the VA, the Bush administration finally acknowledged that their previous budgets had been inadequate and the shortfall had been \$2.7 billion. The Democrats fought all summer to get this resolved. It is a disgrace that it had to come to that. We never should have been in that position.

Then, after months and months of this discussion, in March of 2006, almost a year earlier from today, President Bush's budget cut veterans funding by an additional \$6 billion over 5 years. Keep in mind, this is in the context of not mentioning veterans in his State of the Union addresses when he comes before this Chamber and outlines to us what his priorities are within his budget for the coming year. Veterans are not even mentioned. And I can see why. I wouldn't mention it either, if I had the same type of record on veterans healthcare as the President has. So in March of last year he proposed \$6 billion in cuts over 5 years.

Well, something happened in November of 2006. As we all know, the American people spoke up and said they

were fed up with this and weren't going to take it any more. I know I heard loud and clear throughout my campaign and certainly on that election day in November that veterans funding was a big part of why the American people were frustrated with the decisions of this administration and the decisions of this Congress up to that time.

As we have talked about many times, I said that my number one priority in considering the budget for the current year, which was left undone by the previous Congress, was veterans healthcare funding. I said I would never support a budget that did not at least maintain the current level of services for VA healthcare funding in the continuing years, and certainly in the current year.

Thankfully, under the new leadership in Congress we passed a budget for fiscal year 2007 that increased veterans funding by \$3.6 billion. I won't go back and read the numbers again, but you remember hearing about a lot of billions of dollars of decreases, \$14 billion over 5 years, \$6 billion additionally over 5 years in previous Congresses.

The first budget we had to pass in this Congress, in the climate of enormous pressure for fiscal responsibility, we had to cut over 60 programs to find the room in the new pay-as-you-go budget scoring to pay for this, because we are not running the country on a credit card as we have in years past. We are fiscally responsible and we do have an obligation to find the funding to pay for our priorities. And we did that. We found \$3.6 billion to increase funding for veterans healthcare.

I think in the time to come, very shortly you are going to see a further demonstration, a very strong demonstration from this Congress in a very difficult climate of our commitment to funding VA healthcare. That is going to be something that we are able to demonstrate to the American people, and to keep our promise to do what we said we were going to do and to do what the American people expected us to do.

But the unfortunate reality, Mr. MURPHY, is that these funding cuts from the past have had a terrible effect on the institutions, both in the VA and also the lack of attention in the Department of Defense health facilities, and has led to some very, very serious problems, as outlined by the Washington Post. But those issues have consequences, and they are in the past. We have a responsibility now in the new Congress as leaders and as the elected group from the American people that is charged with dealing with this to take action. As we have said many times tonight, we are going to take action.

□ 2150

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. ALTMIRE, we have to look at veterans' health care, care for our wounded as part and parcel of the cost of the war. The cost of the war is not just troops

on the ground, the equipment, the weapons. The cost of the war is all of that, which, of course, runs into the billions, racking up hour by hour, day by day, but the cost of the war also includes top rate, gold standard care for those troops when they return to this country.

Sometimes you talk about the cost of the war and veterans' health care. They are in kind of different silos in Washington speak, and we are figuring out how Washington talks versus the rest of the world.

Out there, what our veterans and soldiers talk about is a cost of battle, a cost of sending our troops overseas, which includes making sure, when they come back to this country, they get everything they need. That is part of our challenge. We came down here I think, not to speak for both of us, but to sort of change how Washington thinks about this world and start making it match up with the reality out there in our communities. We sat there for the last 2 years campaigning to get here, listening to people screaming and yelling about rising energy prices. We listened to families talk about how they couldn't afford to send their kids to college, and we heard seniors talking about how the Medicare prescription drug bill does not work. And they watch Washington do nothing about it. There is a disconnect that has happened over the past 12 years, and certainly over the last 6 years especially, and how people talk about their problems in the world and how Washington views them. There is no better example than veterans' health care.

To veterans and soldiers, the cost of the war includes taking care of soldiers when they return to the United States. We have to make people understand that again.

We sat for that very long debate about the escalation of the war. We listened to the people on the other side of the aisle make a ridiculously simplistic argument. They said, to support the troops, you must support the commander of the troops. Part of supporting the troops has to be supporting everything he asks you to do. You can't make an independent judgment about whether what he wants is right or wrong; you simply have to line up with him, or we are going to tell you that you are not supporting the men and women who fight for this country.

We know that is wrong. We know that the American people don't believe that, and we know this election was in part about separating what is right for the troops, the country and what the President has asked them to do and has vastly under-equipped them to do.

But you just detailed maybe example number one where what the President's policies are over the past several years has been the exact opposite of what is right for our troops, cuts to veterans' health care, increases in premiums. That is as bold and plain and simple and concise as you can make it.

You can't stand here and say, in order to support the troops, you have

to support the President when the President puts forth a budget, year after year, budgets that don't do justice for the veterans who return.

I think the American people have weighed in on that issue on whether or not we need to support the President on everything he does in order to support the troops, but there is yet another example.

Mr. ALTMIRE, I think we also have to talk about the issue of accountability here. Here is the problem, is that our military is stretched thin right now. This isn't just about supporting the troops; it is about supporting the generals that oversee those troops and supporting the commanders who are struggling to do more with less.

Let me read a quote from General Peter Schoomaker, the Chief of Staff of the Army. He says, "To meet combatant commanders immediate wartime needs, we pooled equipment from across the force to equip soldiers deploying in harm's way. This practice, which we are continuing today, increases risk for our next-to-deploy units and limits our ability to respond to emerging strategic contingencies." This was from a Washington Post story.

That is a pretty amazing statement to come from our Nation's top military brass. To come out on the record, flying in the face of what the President is telling the American people and saying that we are endangering the lives of our troops by overextending the limits of our equipment and our machinery within our Armed Forces.

So we also have to force the military commanders who are desperately trying to do the right thing with a very flawed policy and with an administration which pays no attention to the root causes of the insurgency which puts our forces in harm's way and who doesn't give the Army the resources they need to fight this battle and obviously doesn't treat the soldiers the way they need to be treated when they come home.

This is about supporting our troops and about supporting our commanders and about supporting our Armed Forces in general. They are being asked to do so much more with so much less. This is no secret. When we come and vote on the supplemental request from this President, you better believe that Members on this side of the aisle are going to make sure that there is a historic commitment to veterans, just like there was in the continuing resolution. We have to make that a priority in this new authorization of funding because we are beginning to talk like everybody else talks out there. We are beginning to understand that the cost of this war is the money that it takes to fight the battle on the streets of Baghdad, but it is also the cost of taking care of those soldiers when they come home.

Mr. ALTMIRE, you underplay your effect on that discussion. You were a real hero on that issue of making sure that

the veterans' care and funding were in that continuing resolution. I hope people back in your district understand what you did on that issue to ensure that those funds were part of that continuing resolution.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I appreciate the gentleman mentioning that.

I wanted to finish the time line. I want to make sure to get that in before we run out of time here, and then maybe move on to one other issue.

In September 2006, we talked about the replacement of the 300 employees by the former Halliburton official.

In October 2006, the Secretary of Defense's wife, Joyce Rumsfeld, the then-Secretary of Defense, was taken to Walter Reed by a close friend who was also a Walter Reed volunteer. When hospital officials found out that this was the case, Mrs. Rumsfeld's friend was banned from entering or continuing to volunteer at the hospital.

So the implication was they did not want them to see what was happening at the hospital. That is from a Washington Post article. I would not have mentioned that were it not printed in the Washington Post, that the Secretary of Defense's wife had a close friend volunteering at Walter Reed, and they were asked not to continue volunteering, again the implication that they would not like what they would be seeing there.

Then, moving to February 4, 2007, getting up almost to current time. The number of Federal employees providing facilities management services at Walter Reed by this time, a month ago, had dropped from 300 to fewer than 60. This is before The Washington Post article came out, immediately before. The remaining 60 employees, 50 of them were private workers. That is from the Army Times where we get those statistics.

And then everything begins to change.

February 19, The Washington Post expose comes out detailing mistreatment of veterans and housing on the grounds of Walter Reed Army Medical Center. That is the turning point. Unfortunately, we heard about the 2004 visit and the complaints registered by a senior Member of Congress. We heard, in 2005, the then-Republican Veterans' Affairs Committee chairman announced they were not interested in hearing from our Nation's veterans anymore; they were not welcome to address the committee to talk about some of these issues.

The Washington Post article comes out February 19, one week later, February 26, the soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center were told that they were to wake up at 6 a.m. every morning and have their rooms ready for inspection at 7 a.m. This was new. More importantly, they were told that they were no longer allowed to speak to the media. I think we can see why that is.

So that is the time line of events leading up.

Let's look at what has happened this week. This is Wednesday, March 7.

Well, on March 5, in the new Congress here, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee began holding hearings to investigate the Walter Reed scandal; again, in the context of the previous Congress, that was unwelcome.

March 6 and 7, yesterday and today, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee held hearings on the Walter Reed scandal, and today there was also an Armed Services Committee hearing. So we have three separate committees looking into this, actively reviewing the situation and actively looking for answers and actively looking for results.

□ 2200

So I would refer, once again, anyone interested in learning more about this story to the Newsweek article, and I once again put this chart up. It is a great article. It gives a good summary of the situation, and I would ask the American people and our colleagues to just continue to seek answers. We are going to do our best to get to the bottom of this. We are going to do our best to make sure that this system is resolved, and unless Mr. MURPHY wants to talk about this, I was going to, in our short time, move into one other issue because it is budget season.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Sure.

Mr. ALTMIRE. And we actually had booked this time to talk about the budget, and then these issues were developing this week.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Let me highlight one thing before we leave this subject. This is going to be a chart that we might see a few more times on the 30 Something Working Group hour here.

I just want to make sure the people know we are back to business here. This is 81 hearings that have been held on issues related to the Iraq War this year. I mean, you go through the list just the week right after we got back from recess, the last week of February, on Tuesday, the 27th, two hearings; on Wednesday, the 28th, five hearings; on Thursday, the 1st, three hearings.

Now, that may seem like a lot. It seems like, well, what is Congress doing with all these hearings. There was so much work to be done to uncover all of these abuses. I think that is going to kind of level out over time, but right now we needed to get back to the work of starting to do some oversight when it comes to this war, to start uncovering many of these abuses. We will continue this chart going forward.

This idea that you presented that we have got two jobs, fix it and hold people accountable, we are doing both. This continuing resolution that kept the government running had historic levels of funding for veterans care. I think we are going to be able to do something similar with the supplemental authorization that we will vote on in the coming weeks.

But we are also doing that second part, which is holding this administration accountable, to make sure that it does not happen again, because I do not want to be here a year from now just trying to play catch-up and plugging all the holes that this administration creates. I actually want to solve the problems and make sure that competent people get into places that matter in this administration.

I want to make sure that the President starts putting budgets before us that make sense so that these oversight hearings, 81 hearings that have been held already in this Congress, are going to start to get us there.

That is maybe the moment to turn. We have got a few minutes left to talk a little bit about this budget.

Mr. ALTMIRE. That is a chart that we are going to be seeing a lot more of, and I did want to make one point about that.

Those 81 oversight hearings on what is happening in Iraq, those are not make-work hearings. Those are not hearings just to hold hearings. Those are serious issues that this Congress is looking at.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I sit on the Government Oversight and Reform Committee, and in that committee, we found out that we sent \$9 billion in cash over to Iraq, on pallets, handed it out in duffel bags. We found out that when we were subcontracting to these subcontractors to do security, they subcontracted again, and they subcontracted again, and everybody takes a little money off the top every time. We did not know. We had not heard about any of that until we started doing hearings.

So you are exactly right. Hammer that point home. This is not doing hearings for hearings sake. This is doing hearings to uncover the waste, fraud and abuse that has been happening in this government. This is my taxpayer dollars. This is my neighbor's taxpayer dollars that are going down the drain with some of these programs. This is real stuff.

Mr. ALTMIRE. This is in the context of being told, the American people were told, that the oil proceeds in Iraq would pay for the cost of the war. You have a couple of issues. One is the oil proceeds. We do not have any accounting of where a lot of them are going. They are disappearing into the black market. They are certainly not paying for the cost of the war.

The second issue is, we have paid almost \$400 billion as a Nation on the Iraq War of our money, the American people's money, and as you have outlined, we have lost billions of dollars in Iraq that is completely unaccounted for. You certainly know about that from the Government Oversight Committee, and I am sure we will talk more about that.

In just the few minutes that we have remaining, about 4 minutes remaining, I did want to talk about budget season. Here we are in the spring, and as our

loyal constituents and people who follow the 30 Something Working Group will know, we do talk about the budget at some length and rightly so, because the budget has not been managed well over the past 6 years.

We have an administration that came into office. We had just had four consecutive years of budget surpluses that were forecast as far as the eye can see, and in the last 6 years, we have had six consecutive budget deficits that are now forecast as far as the eye can see. There has been a \$9 trillion swing in the 10-year forecast from a \$5.5 trillion surplus over 10 years to a \$3.5 trillion dollar because of the fiscal mismanagement that we have seen over the past 6 years. The President just submitted to us his 2007 out-of-balance budget.

So I will use this as a teaser for perhaps our next 30 Something Working Group because we will not be able to get into it as much as we would like, but for those watching, I would just say that we are going to talk at great length about some of these issues in the coming weeks.

We were going to talk about foreign-held debt today, and I have a chart that I would refer my colleagues to. This President has added more than \$1 trillion of foreign-held debt to America's balance in just 6 years. He did more than his 42 predecessors combined in just 6 years. The history of the country up to his administration had put less in foreign-held debt than he did in just 6 years.

So let us take a look at who is holding this debt. I get this question all the time because I talk about the deficit and the debt and who is holding it. Japan holds \$644 billion in American debt right now. China holds \$350 billion of American debt. That is after only 1 year earlier it was \$250 billion. So the Chinese have added \$100 billion in American-held debt. The U.K., \$240 billion, and you can see the other countries down here, Hong Kong is on there. Of course, they are now part of China. This was a historical chart.

So we have a lot of work to do to restore fiscal responsibility, but we are going to be talking in the weeks ahead in how we are going to do that with this Congress.

We have already taken the steps to move in that direction with the pay-as-you-go budget scoring, and you are going to see some things happening with the budget that have not been done in 6 or 7 years because we do have a responsibility to be fiscally responsible. The American people sent us here to do that.

So with that, I would ask Mr. MURPHY if he does not have any comments, he has got his e-mail chart there.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. First of all, let me say that there is nothing that acts as a tantalizing teaser to whet the appetites of the American people than telling them if they tune in next time, we will talk about foreign-held national debt. That really gets people's blood pumping.

I cannot give the chart without letting people know out there that the clock is ticking. 365 days you have left officially in the 30 Something Working Group. Congratulations. Happy birthday today. I do not know why the rest of the Members are not here to celebrate.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I think they are out celebrating.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. They might be having one of your behalf.

Mr. ALTMIRE. But thank you for saying that.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Anything we have talked about today, if people want to get more information about, they can e-mail us at 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov, and you can always visit www.speaker.gov/30something. One of these days when they go to that Web site, they will actually see our faces on there. Technology sometimes does not keep up with the changes in the House, but I am sure that our faces will be on that Web site, sooner rather than later.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I thank the gentleman and today is my birthday. It is my 39th birthday, and I was happy to spend it here with you tonight talking about the budget.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. It is how every young boy hopes to celebrate their 39th birthday.

Mr. ALTMORE. That is right.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ABERCROMBIE (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today after 4:00 p.m.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. SARBANES) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. BERKLEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SARBANES, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. POE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, March 14.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. BIGGERT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, March 12, 13, and 14.

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE
PRESIDENT

Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House reports that on March 5, 2007, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills.

H.R. 49. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1300 North Frontage Road West in Vail, Colorado, as the "Gerald R. Ford, Jr. Post Office Building".

H.R. 335. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 152

North 5th Street in Laramie, Wyoming, as the "Gale W. McGee Post Office".

H.R. 433. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1700 Main Street in Little Rock, Arkansas, as the "Scipio A. Jones Post Office Building".

H.R. 514. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 16150 Aviation Loop Drive in Brooksville, Florida, as the "Sergeant Lea Robert Mills Brooksville Aviation Branch Post Office".

H.R. 521. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2633 11th Street in Rock Island, Illinois, as the "Lane Evans Post Office Building".

H.R. 577. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3903

South Congress Avenue in Austin, Texas, as the "Sergeant Henry Ybarra III Post Office Building".

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 9 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, March 8, 2007, at 10 a.m.

EXPENDITURE REPORTS CONCERNING OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL

Reports concerning the foreign currencies and U.S. dollars utilized for Speaker-Authorized Official Travel during the fourth quarter of 2006 and the first quarter of 2007, pursuant to Public Law 95-384 are as follows:

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, DELEGATION TO KUWAIT, IRAQ, PAKISTAN, AFGHANISTAN, AND GERMANY, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED
BETWEEN JAN. 25 AND JAN. 29, 2007

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem ¹		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²
Hon. Nancy Pelosi	1/25	1/27	Kuwait		812.00		(³)				812.00
	1/25	1/26	Iraq				(³)				
	1/27	1/28	Pakistan		456.00		(³)				456.00
	1/28	1/28	Afghanistan				(³)				
Hon. Ike Skelton	1/28	1/29	Germany		328.00		(³)				328.00
	1/25	1/27	Kuwait		812.00		(³)				812.00
	1/26	1/26	Iraq				(³)				
	1/27	1/28	Pakistan		456.00		(³)				456.00
Hon. Tom Lantos	1/28	1/28	Afghanistan				(³)				
	1/28	1/29	Germany		328.00		(³)				328.00
	1/25	1/27	Kuwait		812.00		(³)				812.00
	1/26	1/28	Iraq				(³)				
Hon. Silvestre Reyes	1/27	1/27	Pakistan		456.00		(³)				456.00
	1/28	1/28	Afghanistan				(³)				
	1/28	1/29	Germany		328.00		(³)				328.00
	1/25	1/27	Kuwait		812.00		(³)				812.00
Hon. David Hobson	1/26	1/26	Iraq				(³)				
	1/27	1/28	Pakistan		610.00		(³)				610.00
	1/28	1/28	Afghanistan				(³)				
	1/28	1/29	Germany		328.00		(³)				328.00
Hon. Jack Murtha	1/25	1/27	Kuwait		812.00		(³)				812.00
	1/26	1/26	Iraq				(³)				
	1/27	1/28	Pakistan		456.00		(³)				456.00
	1/28	1/28	Afghanistan				(³)				
Hon. Nita Lowey	1/28	1/29	Germany		328.00		(³)				328.00
	1/25	1/27	Kuwait		812.00		(³)				812.00
	1/26	1/26	Iraq				(³)				
	1/27	1/28	Pakistan		456.00		(³)				456.00
Michael Sheehy	1/28	1/28	Afghanistan				(³)				
	1/28	1/29	Germany		328.00		(³)				328.00
	1/25	1/27	Kuwait		812.00		(³)				812.00
	1/26	1/26	Iraq				(³)				
Erin Conaton	1/27	1/28	Pakistan		456.00		(³)				456.00
	1/28	1/28	Afghanistan				(³)				
	1/28	1/29	Germany		328.00		(³)				328.00
	1/25	1/27	Kuwait		812.00		(³)				812.00
Robert King	1/26	1/26	Iraq				(³)				
	1/27	1/28	Pakistan		456.00		(³)				456.00
	1/28	1/28	Afghanistan				(³)				
	1/28	1/29	Germany		328.00		(³)				328.00
Michael Delaney	1/25	1/27	Kuwait		812.00		(³)				812.00
	1/26	1/26	Iraq				(³)				
	1/27	1/28	Pakistan		456.00		(³)				456.00
	1/28	1/28	Afghanistan				(³)				
Kenny Kraft	1/28	1/29	Germany		328.00		(³)				328.00
	1/25	1/27	Kuwait		812.00		(³)				812.00
	1/26	1/26	Iraq				(³)				
	1/27	1/28	Pakistan		456.00		(³)				456.00
Betsy Phillips	1/28	1/28	Afghanistan				(³)				
	1/28	1/29	Germany		328.00		(³)				328.00
	1/25	1/27	Kuwait		812.00		(³)				812.00
	1/26	1/26	Iraq				(³)				
Committee total	1/27	1/28	Pakistan		456.00		(³)				456.00
	1/28	1/28	Afghanistan				(³)				
	1/28	1/29	Germany		328.00		(³)				328.00
	1/25	1/27	Kuwait		812.00		(³)				812.00
					21,056.00						21,056.00

¹ Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.

² If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.

³ Military air transportation.

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN SEPT. 1, 2006 AND DEC. 31, 2006

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem ¹		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²
Hon. Loretta Sanchez (1 night at refugee camp) ..	12/26	12/28	Chad		524.00						524.00
Lodging in Sudan	12/28	12/29	Sudan		294.00				(?)		294.00
	12/29	12/31	Kenya		276.00				(?)		276.00
No lodging	12/31	1/1	Djibouti		252.00				(?)		278.00
	1/2	1/3	France		440.00						440.00
Committee total					1,786.00				10,464.44		10,464.44
											12,250.44

¹ Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.

² If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.

³ Military air transportation.

BENNIE G. THOMPSON, Chairman, Jan. 12, 2007.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

732. A letter from the Regulatory Specialist, LRAD, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Summary of Joint Interim Rule with Request for Comment: Management Official Interlocks (RIN: 1557-AD01) received February 27, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

733. A letter from the Regulatory Specialist, LRAD, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Community Reinvestment Act Regulations [Docket No. 06-18] (RIN: 1557-AD00) received February 27, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

734. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's annual report to Congress on the FY 2004 program operations of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP), the administration of the Black Lung Benefits Act (BLBA), the Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act (LHWCA), and the Federal Employees' Compensation Act for the period October 1, 2003, through September 30, 2004, pursuant to 30 U.S.C. 936(b); to the Committee on Education and Labor.

735. A letter from the Chair, Jacob K. Javits Fellowship Board, Department of Education, transmitting the Seventh Report to the Congress of the Jacob K. Javits Fellowship Program Board, as authorized by the Higher Education Act of 1965; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

736. A letter from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Virginia; Amendments to VOC and NOx Emission Control Areas and VOC Control Regulations [EPA-R03-OAR-2006-0921; FRL-8282-9] received March 2, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

737. A letter from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — National Priorities List, Final Rule [EPA-HQ-SFUND-2006-0755, EPA-HQ-SFUND-2006-0758 EPA-HQ-2006-0760, EPA-HQ-SFUND-2006-0761, EPA-HQ-SFUND-2006-0762; FRL-8283-7] (RIN 2050-AD75) received March 2, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

738. A letter from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's

final rule — Nonattainment New Source Review (NSR) [EPA-HQ-OAR-2001-0004; FRL-8283-9] (RIN: 2060-AM59) received March 2, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

739. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Education, transmitting in accordance with Section 647(b) of Division F of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, FY 2004, Pub. L. 108-199, the Department's Report to Congress on FY 2006 Competitive Sourcing Efforts; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

740. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's Annual Report on Grants Streamlining, pursuant to Public Law 106-107, section 5; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

741. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Transportation, transmitting in accordance with Section 647(b) of Division F of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, FY 2004, Pub. L. 108-199, and the Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-01-01, the Department's report on competitive sourcing efforts for FY 2006; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

742. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Interior, transmitting the revised Strategic Plan for the fiscal years 2007 to 2012, pursuant to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

743. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Department of the Interior, transmitting in accordance with Section 647(b) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, FY 2004 Pub. L. 108-199, the Department's Report to Congress on FY 2006 Competitive Sourcing Efforts; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

744. A letter from the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's FY 2006-2011 Strategic Plan and FY 2006 Performance and Accountability Report, as required by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

745. A letter from the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's report entitled "Annual Report to Congress on Implementation of Public Law 106-107"; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

746. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Federal Maritime Commission, transmitting in accordance with Section 647(b) of Title VI of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, FY 2004, Pub. L. 108-199, the Commission's report on FY 2006 Competitive Sourcing Efforts; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

747. A letter from the Administrator, General Services Administration, transmitting

in accordance with Section 647(b) of Division F of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, FY 2004, Pub. L. 108-199, the Administration's report on competitive sourcing efforts for FY 2006; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

748. A letter from the Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities, transmitting pursuant to Section 647(b) of Division F of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, FY 2004 (Pub. L. 108-199), a report stating that the Endowment did not undertake any competitive sourcing activities in FY 2006, nor is it conducting any such competitions in the current fiscal year; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

749. A letter from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting a legislative proposal, "To make improvements to the Civil Service Retirement System and the Federal Employees' Retirement System, and for other purposes"; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

750. A letter from the Administrator, Small Business Administration, transmitting the semiannual report of the Office of Inspector General for the period April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act) section 5(b); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

751. A letter from the Director, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the 2006 report on the Apportionment of Membership on the Regional Fishery Management Councils pursuant to section 302 (b)(2)(B) of the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

752. A letter from the Senior Counsel, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's final rule — Implementation of the Private Security Officer Employment Authorization Act of 2004 [Docket No. FBI 112; AG Order No. 2796-2006] (RIN: 1110-AA23) received February 27, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

753. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica S.A. (EMBRAER) Model EMB-135ER and -135KE Airplanes; and Model EMB-145, -145ER, -145MR, -145MP, and -145EP Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-25422; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-095-AD; Amendment 39-14848; AD 2006-25-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 27, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

754. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Lockheed Model L-1011 Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-25554; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-123-AD; Amendment 39-14852; AD 2006-25-11] (RIN: 2120-AA64)

received February 27, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

755. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Fokker Model F27 Mark 500 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-25086; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-019-AD; Amendment 39-14847; AD 2006-25-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 27, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

756. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model MD-11F Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-26527; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-220-AD; Amendment 39-14850; AD 2006-25-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 27, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

757. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; BAE Systems (Operations) Limited Model BAe 146 and Avro 146-RJ Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-25920; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-137-AD; Amendment 39-14851; AD 2006-25-10] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 27, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

758. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747-100, 747-100B, 747-100B SUD, 747-200B, 747-300, 747-400, 747-400D, and 747SR Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-25327; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-116-AD; Amendment 39-14842; AD 2006-09-06 R1] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 27, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

759. A letter from the FHWA Regulation Officer, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Traffic Control Devices on Federal-Aid and Other Streets and Highways; Standards [FHWA Docket No. FHWA-2005-23182] (RIN: 2125-AF16) received February 27, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

760. A letter from the Paralegal, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Emergency Procedures for Public Transportation Systems [Docket FTA-2006-22428] (RIN: 2132-AA89) received February 27, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

761. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's 2007 Annual Report on the regulatory status of the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) "Most Wanted" Recommendations to the Department and its Operating Administrations; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

762. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's 2006 Biennial Report to Congress and the National Transportation Safety Board on the regulatory status of open safety recommendations relating to several safety issues, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 1135(d); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

763. A letter from the Administrator, General Services Administration, transmitting informational copies of prospectuses that support the General Services Administration's Fiscal Year 2007 Capital Investment and Leasing Program; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

764. A letter from the President and Chief Executive Officer, National Railroad Passenger Corporation, transmitting Amtrak's Grant and Legislative Request for FY08, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 24315(b); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

765. A letter from the National Ombudsman and Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Enforcement Fairness, Small Business Administration, transmitting a copy of the Administration's Office of the National Ombudsman's Annual Report on Congress for fiscal year 2005; to the Committee on Small Business.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Ms. SLAUGHTER: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 219. Resolution providing for consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 202) providing for the expenses of certain committees of the House of Representatives in the One Hundred Tenth Congress (Rept. 110-34). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania (for himself, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. SIMPSON, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, Mr. CONAWAY, and Mr. DOOLITTLE):

H.R. 1365. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the alternative minimum tax on corporations; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania (for himself, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. KUHLMAN of New York, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. SIMPSON, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. MANZULLO, and Mr. DOOLITTLE):

H.R. 1366. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the alternative minimum tax on individuals; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. ARCURI, Mr. BACA, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. BAIRD, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARROW, Ms. BEAN, Mr. BECERRA, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. BERRY, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. BOREN, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. BOUCHER, Mr. BOYD of Florida, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. CARNAHAN, Mr. CARNEY, Ms. CARSON, Ms. CASTOR, Mr. CHANDLER, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. CLAY, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. COOPER, Mr. COSTA, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. CROWLEY, Mrs. CUBIN, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DAVIS of Alabama, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs.

DAVIS of California, Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. DELAHUNT, Ms. DELAUNO, Mr. DICKS, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. ELLSWORTH, Mr. EMANUEL, Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. FARR, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. FILNER, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. GERLACH, Ms. GIFFORDS, Mr. GILCHREST, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. GORDON, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. HALL of New York, Mr. HARE, Ms. HARMAN, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. HERSETH, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. HINOJOSA, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HODES, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. HOLT, Mr. HONDA, Ms. HOOLEY, Mr. HOYER, Mr. INSLEE, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. JEFFERSON, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mr. KAGEN, Mr. KANJORSKI, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KELLER, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. KIND, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. KIRK, Mr. KLEIN of Florida, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. LATOURETTE, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. LYNCH, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. MATHESON, Ms. MATSUI, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. McNULTY, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. MEEK of Florida, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. MICA, Mr. MICHAUD, Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. MOLLOHAN, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut, Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. MURTHA, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Ms. NOR-TON, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. OBBY, Mr. OLVER, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. PICKERING, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. POMEROY, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. RENZI, Mr. REYES, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. ROSS, Mr. ROTHMAN, Ms. ROYBAL-AL-LARD, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. RUSH, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. SALAZAR, Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. SAXTON, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mrs. SCHMIDT, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. SESTAK, Mr. SHAYS, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. SIRES, Mr. SKELTON, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. SNYDER, Ms. SOLIS, Mr. SPACE, Mr. SPRATT, Mr. STARK, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. SULLIVAN, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. TANNER, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr.

UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. UPTON, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. VISCLOSKEY, Mr. WALSH of New York, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, Mr. WAMP, Ms. WATERS, Ms. WATSON, Mr. WATT, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. WEINER, Mr. WELCH of Vermont, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. WILSON of Ohio, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. WU, Mr. WYNN, Mr. YARMUTH, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska):

H.R. 1367. A bill to amend section 712 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, section 2705 of the Public Health Service Act, and section 9812 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require equity in the provision of mental health and substance-related disorder benefits under group health plans; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Education and Labor, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mr. REICHERT, and Mr. SMITH of Washington):

H.R. 1368. A bill to establish a program to provide financial incentives to encourage the adoption and use of interactive personal health records; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 1369. A bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to expand the scope of the Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Labor, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, and House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BUYER (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Ms. HERSETH, and Mr. LAMBORN):

H.R. 1370. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs an Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. PENCE, and Mr. WALZ of Minnesota):

H.R. 1371. A bill to amend the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 to provide producers on a farm with greater flexibility in selecting the crops to be planted on the base acres of the farm; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California (for himself, Mr. MELANCON, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. JINDAL, Mr. TAYLOR, and Mr. DAVIS of Alabama):

H.R. 1372. A bill to provide grants to recruit new teachers, principals, and other school leaders to, and retain and support current and returning teachers, principals, and other school leaders employed in, public elementary and public secondary schools, and to help higher education, in areas impacted by Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. BACA (for himself and Ms. CARSON):

H.R. 1373. A bill to provide for the award of a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to Tiger Woods, in recognition of his service to the Nation in promoting excellence and good sportsmanship, and in breaking barriers with grace and dignity by showing that golf is a sport for all people; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. BOYD of Florida (for himself and Mr. CRENSHAW):

H.R. 1374. A bill to amend the Florida National Forest Land Management Act of 2003 to authorize the conveyance of an additional tract of National Forest System land under that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. BUCHANAN:

H.R. 1375. A bill to amend the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 to provide for the expedited consideration of certain proposed rescissions of budget authority, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Budget, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CARDOZA:

H.R. 1376. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to establish independent foster care adolescents as a mandatory category (and not an optional category) of individuals for coverage under State Medicaid programs; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CUELLAR (for himself, Mr. RENZI, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. PASTOR, and Ms. HERSETH):

H.R. 1377. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a credit against tax for an individual teaching in a school with a significant number of limited English proficient students and to provide a deduction for expenses paid or incurred by a teacher for courses required for certification in teaching English as a second language; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GOODE:

H.R. 1378. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow individuals to designate any portion of a refund for use by the Secretary of Health and Human Services in providing catastrophic health coverage to individuals who do not otherwise have health coverage; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GUTIERREZ (for himself, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. HONDA, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Ms. SOLIS, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. REYES):

H.R. 1379. A bill to assist aliens who have been lawfully admitted in becoming citizens of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HOLDEN (for himself and Mr. PLATTS):

H.R. 1380. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to provide that a monthly insurance benefit thereunder shall be paid for the month in which the recipient dies, subject to a reduction of 50 percent if the recipient dies during the first 15 days of such month, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. JONES of Ohio (for herself, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. CLAY, and Mr. COHEN):

H.R. 1381. A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to improve the administration of elections for Federal office, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the

Committees on the Judiciary, Ways and Means, and Science and Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. KUHLMANN of New York:

H.R. 1382. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for an assured adequate level of funding for veterans health care; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California:

H.R. 1383. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide penalties for the misuse of robocalls; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MCCARTHY of California:

H.R. 1384. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 118 Minner Street in Bakersfield, California, as the "Buck Owens Post Office"; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. MCDERMOTT (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. WELLER):

H.R. 1385. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve and extend certain energy-related tax provisions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. MCDERMOTT (for himself, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. ARCURI, Mr. STARK, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. DAVIS of Alabama, Ms. CASTOR, Mr. KAGEN, Mr. HALL of New York, and Mr. ELLISON):

H.R. 1386. A bill to repeal a provision enacted to end Federal matching of State spending of child support incentive payments; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. MELANCON:

H.R. 1387. A bill to adjust the boundary of the Barataria Preserve Unit of the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve in the State of Louisiana, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. SARBANES (for himself, Mr. HOYER, Mr. GILCHREST, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. WYNN, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. NORTON, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia, and Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia):

H.R. 1388. A bill to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Star-Spangled Banner Trail in the States of Maryland and Virginia and the District of Columbia as a National Historic Trail; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. SARBANES (for himself, Mr. HOYER, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. GILCHREST, Mr. WYNN, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. MCHUGH, Ms. NORTON, Mr. MCCOTTER, and Mr. MORAN of Virginia):

H.R. 1389. A bill to establish the Star-Spangled Banner and War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. TANCREDO (for himself and Mr. ROHRBACHER):

H.R. 1390. A bill to require Senate confirmation of an individual appointed to serve as the Director of the American Institute in Taiwan; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. VISCLOSKEY (for himself, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. CARSON, and Mr. MCNULTY):

H.R. 1391. A bill to accelerate efforts to develop vaccines for diseases primarily affecting developing countries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WEINER (for himself and Mr. FLAKE):

H.R. 1392. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to require, as a condition of receiving a homeland security grant, that a grant recipient submit reports on each expenditure made using grant funds; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. WHITFIELD (for himself, Mr. WILSON of Ohio, and Mr. SHIMKUS):

H.R. 1393. A bill to amend the USEC Privatization Act to provide an extension of the period during which individuals may bring a suit for certain violations of employee protection provisions under such Act; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina:

H.R. 1394. A bill to expand the teacher loan forgiveness provisions of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to include speech-language pathologists; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina:

H.R. 1395. A bill to prevent abuse of Government credit cards; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. WOOLSEY:

H.R. 1396. A bill to amend the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 to prohibit the labeling of cloned livestock and products derived from cloned livestock as organic; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. CLEAVER:

H. Con. Res. 84. Concurrent resolution encouraging recognition of February 13th of each year for the founding for the Negro Leagues in Kansas City, Missouri; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. ISSA:

H. Res. 218. A resolution amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to require that, as of the date of adoption of this resolution, a proportional distribution of committee seats, staff, and financial resources be made; to the Committee on Rules.

By Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas:

H. Res. 220. A resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H. R. 511) to pledge the faithful support of Congress to members of the United States Armed Forces serving in harm's way; to the Committee on Rules.

By Ms. LEE (for herself and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi):

H. Res. 221. A resolution honoring the life, legacy, and contributions of Fannie Lou Townsend Hamer on the 30th anniversary of her death for her dedication to freedom and justice; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York (for herself, Mr. WALSH of New York, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. GALLEGLY, Mr. MCHUGH, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. TANNER, Mr.

HINOJOSA, Mr. SIRE, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Ms. WATSON, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. CARNAHAN, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. WU, Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, and Mr. WEXLER):

H. Res. 222. A resolution expressing the support of the House of Representatives for the Good Friday Agreement, signed on April 10, 1998, as a blueprint for a lasting peace in Northern Ireland, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. SHADEGG (for himself, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. POE, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. DOYLE, Mrs. CUBIN, Mr. GORDON, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Ms. FALLIN, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. REICHERT, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina, Mr. PITTS, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. ISSA, Mr. TANCREDO, Mr. LINDER, Mr. GOODE, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. CANTOR, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. AKIN, and Mr. WELDON of Florida):

H. Res. 223. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of a National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. SHUSTER:

H. Res. 224. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that corporate owners of websites that share user-posted videos should take action to remove jihadi propaganda; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. WALBERG (for himself, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. CAMP of Michigan, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. UPTON, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. KNOLLENBERG, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. LEVIN, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. CONYERS, and Mr. DINGELL):

H. Res. 225. A resolution congratulating Tony Dungy, a native of Jackson, Michigan, for leading the Indianapolis Colts to victory in Super Bowl XLI; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. WOOLSEY:

H. Res. 226. A resolution to recognize John Pehle for his contributions to the Nation in helping rescue Jews and other minorities from the Holocaust during World War II; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. WOOLSEY:

H. Res. 227. A resolution calling for the adoption of a Sensible, Multilateral American Response Terrorism (SMART) security platform for the 21st century; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 74: Mr. UDALL of Colorado and Mr. CASTLE.

H.R. 111: Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. CONYERS, and Mr. LANTOS.

H.R. 140: Mr. ELLISON, Mr. MARSHALL, and Ms. CARSON.

H.R. 146: Mr. PAYNE, Mr. REGULA, and Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 171: Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. HARE, Ms. WATSON, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. SERRANO.

H.R. 190: Mr. BURTON of Indiana.

H.R. 196: Mr. BERRY.

H.R. 197: Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mr. LANGEVIN, and Mr. PETRI.

H.R. 243: Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 296: Mr. BAKER.

H.R. 322: Mr. BLUNT.

H.R. 406: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 471: Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. HERGER, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. KAGEN, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. MCHUGH, and Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California.

H.R. 477: Mr. WALSH of New York, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. KNOLLENBERG, Mr. COHEN, Mr. REYES, Ms. CARSON, Mr. HILL, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. PASCRELL, and Mr. MCHUGH.

H.R. 488: Ms. NORTON, Mr. GONZALEZ, and Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 526: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 539: Mr. DELAHUNT.

H.R. 579: Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. OBERSTAR, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. MICHAUD, and Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 583: Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. WAMP, Ms. HERSETH, and Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia.

H.R. 621: Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. PITTS, and Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts.

H.R. 634: Mr. HASTERT, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. GALLEGLY, and Mr. ORTIZ.

H.R. 653: Mr. LAMPSON.

H.R. 661: Mr. ABERCROMBIE and Mr. UDALL of New Mexico.

H.R. 676: Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts.

H.R. 677: Ms. LEE, Mr. PASCRELL, and Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 678: Mr. ALLEN.

H.R. 697: Ms. FOXX.

H.R. 698: Mr. HOLT, Mr. WEXLER, and Mr. CARNEY.

H.R. 699: Mr. BOUSTANY and Mr. SMITH of Nebraska.

H.R. 725: Mr. WICKER and Mr. SIMPSON.

H.R. 741: Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania and Mr. KENNEDY.

H.R. 758: Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. MACK, and Mr. OBERSTAR.

H.R. 770: Mr. STARK.

H.R. 782: Ms. KAPTUR and Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky.

H.R. 787: Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. MORAN of Virginia.

H.R. 806: Mr. HOLDEN.

H.R. 826: Mr. POE.

H.R. 880: Mr. SHAYS, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, and Mr. REICHERT.

H.R. 882: Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. PORTER, Mr. UPTON, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. BOUSTANY, and Ms. HOOLEY.

H.R. 895: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 925: Mr. MCKEON.

H.R. 939: Mr. COBLE, Mr. POE, and Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia.

H.R. 981: Mr. LATOURETTE.

H.R. 988: Mr. HUNTER, Mr. CAMPBELL of California, Mr. ISSA, Mr. BILBRAY, Mrs. BONO, Mr. ROHRBACHER, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. LEWIS of California, Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. MCKEON, Mr. DREIER, Mr. NUNES, Mr. MCCARTHY of California, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Mr. HASTERT, Mr. POE, Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania, and Ms. SOLIS.

H.R. 992: Ms. WOOLSEY.

H.R. 998: Ms. BEAN, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. SIRE, Ms. CARSON, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. KANJORSKI, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. WATERS, and Mr. WEXLER.

H.R. 1000: Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. WATT, Mr. DAVIS of Alabama,

Ms. LEE, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. RUSH, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. SCHIFF, and Mr. FATTAH.

H.R. 1014: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. RUSH, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. COHEN, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Mr. FILNER, and Mr. KENNEDY.

H.R. 1022: Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. FILNER, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. ACKERMAN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

H.R. 1034: Mr. McCAUL of Texas.

H.R. 1040: Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 1043: Mr. CRAMER, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. GORDON, and Mr. CUELLAR.

H.R. 1057: Mr. FEENEY.

H.R. 1064: Mr. CLAY, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. KIRK, Ms. LEE, Mr. SPRATT, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. LYNCH, and Mr. WU.

H.R. 1069: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

H.R. 1076: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.

H.R. 1085: Mr. WAMP and Mrs. MYRICK.

H.R. 1086: Mr. WAMP and Mrs. MYRICK.

H.R. 1115: Ms. BORDALLO and Mr. LEVIN.

H.R. 1125: Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mrs. DRAKE, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. CAMPBELL of California, Ms. FALLIN, Mr. POE, Mr. REICHERT, and Mr. PEARCE.

H.R. 1132: Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. RUSH, Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. GORDON, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 1134: Mr. EHLERS and Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1148: Mr. CAPUANO.

H.R. 1153: Ms. FALLIN, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Mr. GOODLATTE.

H.R. 1157: Mr. TERRY, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. BOUCHER, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. PETRI, Mr. MATHESON, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. OLVER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WU, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. EDWARDS, and Mr. MCNULTY.

H.R. 1188: Mrs. DAVIS of California.

H.R. 1192: Mr. MCHUGH, and Mr. ABERCROMBIE.

H.R. 1198: Mr. MCCOTTER.

H.R. 1228: Mr. THOMPSON of California.

H.R. 1232: Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. MORAN of Kansas, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mrs. CAPPS, and Mr. ROGERS of Alabama.

H.R. 1242: Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. SKELTON, Mr. AKIN, and Mr. CLEAVER.

H.R. 1257: Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. CARSON, Mr. MARSHALL, and Mrs. MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 1261: Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. GOODE, and Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California.

H.R. 1279: Mr. TIERNEY and Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 1281: Ms. ESHOO, Mr. GONZALEZ, Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. CUELLAR, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

H.R. 1287: Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California and Ms. HOOLEY.

H.R. 1289: Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 1293: Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. POE, Mr. MILLER of Florida, and Mr. WEINER.

H.R. 1307: Mr. LAMPSON.

H.R. 1314: Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. POE, Mr. TANCREDO, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. GOODE, and Mr. ISSA.

H.R. 1325: Mr. PALLONE, Mr. BECERRA, and Mr. PASCRELL.

H.R. 1330: Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. KIRK, Mr. HOLDEN, and Mr. BRALEY of Iowa.

H.R. 1342: Mr. WESTMORELAND.

H.R. 1350: Mr. KIND, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. GILLMOR, Mr. REGULA, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. KILDEE, and Mr. KUHLMAN of New York.

H.R. 1352: Mr. WEXLER and Mr. LANTOS.

H.R. 1353: Mr. CUELLAR and Mr. DEFazio.

H.R. 1355: Mr. SPRATT and Ms. FOX.

H.R. 1359: Mr. DUNCAN.

H.R. 1363: Mrs. CHRISTENSEN and Mr. MARSHALL.

H. J. Res. 9: Mr. WICKER and Mr. BLUNT.

H. Con. Res. 9: Ms. BERKLEY.

H. Con. Res. 50: Mr. CANTOR, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. SHAD-EGG, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. WELDON of Florida, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. GOODE, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. FORBES, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. PITTS, Mr. SALLI, Mr. ISSA, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. AKIN, and Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland.

H. Con. Res. 60: Mr. CARNEY, Mr. FILNER, and Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H. Con. Res. 68: Mr. PAYNE, Mr. FOSSELLA, and Mr. GALLEGLY.

H. Res. 16: Mr. GOODLATTE and Mr. FORBES.

H. Res. 18: Mr. MARCHANT and Mr. GILCHREST.

H. Res. 49: Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KING of New York, and Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota.

H. Res. 76: Mr. KENNEDY.

H. Res. 101: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. TOWNS, and Mr. RANGEL.

H. Res. 107: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania and Mr. SHUSTER.

H. Res. 118: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.

H. Res. 136: Mr. UDALL of Colorado and Mr. KUHLMAN of New York.

H. Res. 146: Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota.

H. Res. 171: Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. BERMAN, and Mr. WICKER.

H. Res. 185: Mr. BERMAN.

H. Res. 186: Mr. HOLT and Mr. MCINTYRE.

H. Res. 197: Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. DICKS, Mr. COHEN, Mr. COOPER, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. TANNER, Mr. HOLT, Ms. HARMAN, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. HIGGINS, Mrs. DAVIS of California, and Mr. KLEIN of Florida.

limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

OFFERED BY MR. OBERSTAR

The amendment No. 1 to be offered by Mr. OBERSTAR, or a designee, to H.R. 720, the Water Quality Financing Act of 2007, does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(d), 9(e), or 9(f) of Rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

OFFERED BY MR. GEORGE MILLER OF CALIFORNIA

H.R. 1372, the Revitalizing New Orleans by Attracting America's Leaders Act of 2007, contains the following congressional earmarks as defined in clause 9(d) of House Rule XXI:

Designates grants to state educational agencies affected by Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita, in the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama; and

Designates grants to eligible institutions of higher education in the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

AMENDMENTS

Under clause 8 of rule XVIII, proposed amendments were submitted as follows:

H.R. 720

OFFERED BY: MR. OBERSTAR

AMENDMENT NO. 1: Page 4, line 7, strike "wastewater infrastructure assistance" and insert "eligible projects described in section 603(c)".

Page 5, after line 9, insert the following:

(c) SMALL FLOWS CLEARINGHOUSE.—Section 104(q)(4) (33 U.S.C. 1254(q)(4)) is amended—

(1) in the first sentence by striking "\$1,000,000" and inserting "\$3,000,000"; and

(2) in the second sentence by striking "1986" and inserting "2009".

Page 5, line 10, strike "(c)" and insert "(d)".

Page 6, strike lines 14 through 16 and insert the following:

(B) in paragraph (2) by striking "in reducing such pollutants" and all that follows before the period at the end and inserting "to manage, reduce, treat, or reuse municipal stormwater, including low-impact development technologies"; and

Page 11, lines 9 and 10, strike "has considered" and all that follows through "alternative management" and insert the following: "has considered, to the maximum extent practical and as determined appropriate by the recipient, the costs and effectiveness of other design, management,".

Page 14, strike lines 1 and 2 and insert the following:

"(6) for measures to manage, reduce, treat, or reuse municipal stormwater;".

Page 18, line 3, insert "low-impact technologies," before "nonstructural".

Page 18, line 5, insert "nutrient" before "pollutant trading".

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks,